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Assembly Proceedings

Official Report

Bengal Legislative Assembly

Tenth Session, 1941

The 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd and 24th March, 1941

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GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

GOVERNOR OF BENGAL.

His Excellency SIR JOHN ARTHUR HERBERT, G.C.I.E.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

(1) The Hon'ble Mr. ABUL KASEM FAZLUL HUQ, in charge of the Education Department.

(2) The Hon'ble Khwaja Sir NAZIMUDDIN, K.C.I.E., in charge of the Home Department.

(3) The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY, in charge of the Revenue Department.

(4) The Hon'ble Nawab Khwaja HABIBULLAH Bahadur, of Dacca, in charge of Public Health (including Medical) and Local Self-Government Departments.

(5) The Hon'ble Maharaja SRIS CHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar, in charge of Communications and Works Department.

(6) The Hon'ble Mr. HUSEYAN SHAHEED SUHRAWARDY, in charge of Finance, Commerce and Labour Departments.

(7) The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur, in charge of the Judicial and Legislative Departments.

(8) The Hon'ble Mr. PRASANNA DEB RAIKUT, in charge of the Forests and Excise Departments.

(9) The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK, in charge of the Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness Departments.

(10) The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN, in charge of Agriculture and Industries (including Veterinary) and Rural Reconstruction Departments.

GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

SPEAKER

The Hon'ble Sir MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur.

DEPUTY SPEAKER.

M. ASHRAFALI, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

SECRETARY.

K. ALI AFZAL, Esq., Barrister-at-law.

FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

Rai N. N. SEN GUPTA Bahadur.

SECOND ASSISTANT SECRETARY.

Khan Sahib QUAZI MUHAMMAD SADRUL OLA.

REGISTRAR.

A. B. CHATERJI, Esq.

THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PROCEEDINGS

(Official Report of the Tenth Session.)

Volume LIX—No. 4.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Wednesday, the 19th March, 1941, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr Speaker (the Hon'ble Sir MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur), in the Chair, 8 Hon'ble Ministers and 186 members.

Situation at Dacca and Khulna.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Sir, before we proceed with to-day's business, may I refer, through you, to the Hon'ble Chief Minister the disquieting reports that we are getting about the Dacca situation. Many members of the House are feeling very uncomfortable and much disturbed because of the reports that are coming from Dacca and also from Khulna. We shall be very much obliged if the Hon'ble Chief Minister enlightens the House as to the latest developments of the situation so that we can proceed to the normal business of the day after hearing him.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The official reports are not yet complete, but the latest report from private individuals goes to show that a large portion of the town is under fire and at least one mosque has been almost demolished and two others have been attacked. Eleven or 12 persons have been killed. But these are all from non-official sources. We have not got complete official reports.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Sir, what about Khulna?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: At Khulna the situation is slightly better, almost under control.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Realisation of tola and abwabs in markets of Bakarganj district.

***170. Mr. ABDUL WAHAB KHAN:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that *tola*, *abwabs*, etc., are realised on commodities and heads of cattle bought and sold in almost all the *bazars* and *hats* of the district of Bakarganj?

(*b*) Is it a fact that an inquiry was held by the District Magistrate into the allegations of aggressions upon the dealers and buyers in the matter of realisation of *tolas* and *abwabs* at Hizla and Paterhat *bandars*?

(*c*) If so, what was the result of the said inquiry?

(*d*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what steps, if any, the Government have taken or propose to take in the matter?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) Yes. *Tolas* are realised from persons selling commodities of any kind and cattle.

(*b*) Yes.

(*c*) As a result of the enquiry the realisation of *tolas* for the deity, for *bhanmali* (i.e., sweeping the *hat*), and for the payment of landlord's employees was abolished. *Hashil* which had previously been levied on persons selling any commodity and cattle was reduced from 5 pies in the rupee to 2 pies, the latter charge being regarded as a fee for the use of the landlord's market.

(*d*) In the present Session of this House I intend to introduce the Bengal Markets Regulation Bill, and the honourable member will find that the Bill provides for the fixing of justifiable charges and for the prevention of unjustified exactions. Provision has also been made in the Budget for 1941-42 for a full enquiry into the levy of tolls, *abwabs*, etc., in the markets and *hats* of the Province. This will be necessary for applying the provisions of the Bill if it becomes law.

Dog racing at Behala.

***171. Dr. NALINAKSHA SANYAL:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department aware that advertisements regarding the dog racing at Behala are appearing in the Press for some time past?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have taken or propose to take any steps to enable the dog racing and betting in connection therewith to be held at Behala?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the circumstances under which such steps have been taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Government is considering what action should be taken regarding dog racing at Behala.

(*c*) Does not arise.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huq is in favour of sanctioning dog racing at Behala?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government have declared their intention to sanction dog racing?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: No.

Test relief work in certain districts of Western Bengal affected by flood and drought.

***172. Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department aware that distress caused by drought and flood is prevailing in many districts of Western Bengal, especially in Birbhum, Burdwan and Midnapore?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state, district by district, the amount spent up to date in test relief work in the affected areas of those districts?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the distress prevailing in Birbhum, Burdwan and some parts of Midnapore district is very acute?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government contemplate—

(*i*) declaring those districts as famine stricken; and

(*ii*) giving necessary relief from the famine insurance fund?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy): (*a*) Distress is prevailing in some parts of the district of Birbhum for want of timely rainfall. In

some parts of the district of Burdwan there is some distress owing to partial failure of crops. In the district of Midnapore there was some distress in parts of Pataspur, Bhagwanpur and Nandigram thanas due to flood.

(*b*) Birbhum—Rs.33,862 (up to 15th February, 1941); Burdwan—Rs.2,680; and Midnapore—Rs.4,000.

(*c*) and (*d*) (*i*) In parts of the district of Birbhum scarcity has been declared. In the other districts the distress is not yet acute.

(*ii*) Government will take necessary steps to deal with the situation.

Withholding of a letter from a security prisoner by police.

***173. Mr. JNANENDRA CHANDRA MAJUMDER:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether it is a fact that a letter written on the 20th December, 1940, by security prisoner Babu Pratap Chandra Majumdar of Hili (Hili), Dinajpur, now lodged in the Hijli Special Jail, to Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A., of Dinajpur in the matter of Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill, has been withheld by the police; and

(*ii*) whether security prisoners are debarred from seeking redress of their economic grievances by bringing them to the notice of the members of the legislature?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of directing the police to allow Babu Pratap Chandra Majumdar to correspond with Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu, M.L.A., and other members of the legislature on the Non-Agricultural Tenancy matter, in future?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: (*a*) (*i*) Such a letter, written on the 19th (not 20th) December, was withheld by the police.

(*ii*) I refer the honourable member to the statement of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin on the 28th November in reply to the debate on the adjournment motion.

(*b*) I refer the honourable member to the Bengal Security Prisoners' Rule 19, a copy of which is laid on the table.

(*c*) No.

(*d*) Such correspondence is prohibited under the rule and is not covered by the concession which my honourable colleague undertook to allow.

Statement referred to in the reply to clause (b) of starred question No. 173.

A security prisoner may write two and receive four letters a week subject to the provisions of these rules relating to examination and censorship. On urgent occasions, e.g., a death or serious illness in the family, this rule may be relaxed at the discretion of the Superintendent. The subject matter of all letters must be limited to private matters and there must be no reference to jail administration and discipline, to other prisoners or to politics.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the matter contained in the letter which was political?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: It was something about the non-agricultural tenancy.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that certain cases in regard to non-agricultural tenancy are pending before the Court to which this ex-detenu is a party?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: No, we have no such information

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Does the Hon'ble Minister think it desirable to enquire into the matter as to whether this ex-detenu is interested in certain cases regarding non-agricultural tenancy which are pending before the Court?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: If necessary we shall, but I do not see the connection between the letter and the pending cases. In the letter, I do not think these cases were referred to or the prisoner wanted to give any instruction to the honourable member as a lawyer to take steps in the matter.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware of the full contents of the letter?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The letter is not here before me, but it deals with the general question about non-agricultural tenancy legislation.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the ex-detenu is very much interested in this legislation because he is a party to such cases?

Mr. SPEAKER: That naturally follows.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether, if my honourable friend Mr. Nishitha Nath Kundu assures him that an interview is necessary in connection with certain pending cases, he will consider the desirability of arranging for the interview?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: That is a hypothetical question.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: He is telling you——

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: He has not told me that. He has simply said that he is interested in non-agricultural tenancy legislation generally.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: No, no.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: That is what he told me. All of us are interested in some legislation or other, but that is no reason why Government should allow correspondence to be carried on between a prisoner and a member of the Legislature outside the prison on that particular subject.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: If discussion about legislation is necessary in connection with pending cases, will the Hon'ble Minister consider the desirability——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is absolutely hypothetical.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether in that letter there was anything besides the Non-Agricultural Tenancy Bill?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I believe not.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether security prisoners are not at all entitled to make any communication they require to the Government departments or to the Legislature?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I don't think so. Here is the statement of my honourable colleague the Home Minister in which the concessions which are allowed to security prisoners are fully mentioned.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if within the prescribed number of letters allowed the security prisoners are entitled to send any communication addressed to a Government department or to the Legislature or to a member thereof without any let or hindrance by the police?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: In the statement it is mentioned that the subject matter of all letters must be limited to private business and there must be no reference to jail administration and discipline, to other prisoners or to politics.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the security prisoners are not allowed to send any communication on jail administration either to the Hon'ble the Home Minister or——

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a letter; that is an application to Government.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: A communication contained in a letter addressed to somebody I used the word "communication" deliberately

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The point is this, that when you talk of letters it means letters to private individuals; but when you talk of memorials to Government, that is a different matter.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: I want to know whether such letters or representations which were in the form of petitions or letters addressed to members of the Legislature as members will not be regarded as communications addressed to them in their official capacity as members of the Legislature drawing salary from the public exchequer and forming a part of the government administration?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: No, Sir, that is not the interpretation of the law, as I understand it.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Do I take it, Sir, that this is the decided interpretation of Government or is it the Hon'ble Minister's individual opinion?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: No. That is the interpretation by a person who is in a position to interpret the rules.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a security prisoner is entitled to write letters to a member of this Legislature in respect of certain legislative measures in which he is interested?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: No, Sir

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: On a point of privilege, Sir. We as members of the Legislature who constitute the Opposition as well as the other group who are supporters of Government are a part of this Government, and therefore any complaint from any jail or anywhere else coming to us in our official capacity ought to be treated as addressed to the Government of the country. I claim that privilege through you.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you constitute the Government, why not ask the Government to change the rules? I feel these are matters which should be discussed in connection with the Privilege Bill which is coming up before the House.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: I submit that we are being deprived of our legitimate activity as members of this Legislature, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a matter which you can discuss in the Committee of Privilege.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: On the same point of privilege, may I ask you whether you, Sir, do not consider it as Speaker of this House to exercise your absolute right that any communication addressed to you as Speaker should be delivered to you without let or hindrance and whether you do not consider that any member of the Legislature including the Speaker and the Ministers is entitled to have such letters delivered to him when they are addressed to him in his official capacity.

Mr. SPEAKER: In a matter like this a question has arisen with regard to the communications of those members of the House who are now in prison. There have been letters addressed to me as Speaker

by some members of this House now undergoing imprisonment, but unfortunately in the absence of any statutory provision, I am helpless in the matter. Under the rules now in force and circumstanced as we are, even the letters written to me in my capacity as Speaker of this House are subjected to censorship. I have of course written to Government that a matter like this should be expedited and that there should be no avoidable delay in sending the letters to me. Government have agreed to that. But so far as letters written to individual members of this House are concerned, I am sorry I, as Speaker of this House, cannot possibly interfere in the matter.

Treatment meted out to persons detained under Defence of India Rules.

***174. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the prisoners detained now under the Defence of India Rules, without trial, in the Hijli, Presidency and other jails of Bengal are having the treatment equivalent to that of division I and II convicts in jail?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the difference of treatment meted out to the division I and II convicts and the prisoners detained in jail without trial under the Defence of India Rules in the matter of—

(*i*) food;

(*ii*) clothing; and

(*iii*) facilities for reading and writing?

(*c*) Has the Hon'ble Minister taken steps to give better treatment to the persons detained without trial in jail in the matter of food, clothing, sports and exercises, facilities for reading and writing than the convicts tried and convicted in the Court of Law?

(*d*) If so, what are they?

(*e*) Is it a fact that on former occasions such as between 1914-20, 1923-28, 1930-38, persons who were detained in jail without trial received better treatment in the matter of food, clothing, writing and receiving letters, sports and exercises, than the prisoners detained without trial at the present time?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(*g*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table a copy of the rules for the treatment of the security prisoners under Defence of India Rules?

(*h*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the treatment meted out to the prisoners detained without trial in 1914-20, 1923-28, 1930-38?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: (*a*) Persons detained under Defence of India Rule 26 are treated in accordance with special rules and receive treatment analogous to that of convicts in divisions I and II. Of these there are 7 in the Presidency Jail. At present there is no person detained under Defence of India Rule 129.

(*b*) A statement is placed on the Library table.

(*c*) and (*d*) A revision of the rules in these respects is under consideration.

(*e*), (*f*) and (*h*) I do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by this comparison.

(*g*) I am not prepared to lay the rules on the table as they are under revision.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how long he will take in considering the revision of these rules?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: That is very difficult for me to say, Sir. Obviously the question will be decided by the Hon'ble Sir Nazimuddin when he comes back and we must wait till then.

Members of Scheduled Castes recruited for Jute Regulation Department for certain districts.

***175. Babu MADHUSUDAN SARKAR:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of officers recruited from October, 1940, up to date, for the Jute Regulation Department for the districts of Pabna, Bogra, and Rajshahi;

(*b*) their designations; and

(*c*) the number of them that are from the Scheduled Castes of the said districts?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: A statement is laid on the table.

Statement referred to in the reply to starred question No. 175, showing the number of officers recruited from October, 1940, up to date, for Jute Regulation Department for Pabna, Bogra and Rajshahi districts.

Designation of officers recruited.	For Rajshahi district.		For Bogra district.		For Pabna district.	
	Total No. recruited.	No. of Scheduled Castes.	Total No. recruited.	No. of Scheduled Castes.	Total No. recruited.	No. of Scheduled Castes.
I. Camp Assistants and P.L.A.'s, etc.	190	26	143	23	198	29
II. Inspectors*	5	1	4	2	5	Nil
III. Assistant Inspectors.*	25	1	20	3	26	3
IV. Peons ..	156	23	113	11	164	21

* *N.B.*—For the whole province, the figures are as follows:—

Inspectors recruited—120, of which 20 are Scheduled Castes, i.e., 2 in excess.

Assistant Inspectors actually working—592, of whom 80 are Scheduled Castes.

Mr. MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: As it has been reported to me that some Caste Hindus representing themselves as Scheduled Castes have managed to secure some appointments, and in these circumstances ——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, Mr. Sarkar. You first write out your question and then put it.

Mr. MADHUSUDAN SARKAR: In these circumstances will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to direct the Department——

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Mr. PREMHARI BARMA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Caste Hindus represent themselves as Scheduled Castes when a permanent vacancy occurs?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry whether there have been any such cases?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I am always prepared to make an enquiry.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Honorary Magistrate in Dum Dum Independent Bench Court.

64. Maulvi MD. IBRAHIM: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Judicial Department aware that there are no Muslim Honorary Magistrates in the Dum Dum Independent Bench in the subdivision of Barrackpore, in the district of 24-Parganas?

(*b*) If so, do the Government consider the desirability of appointing a Muslim as an Honorary Magistrate in the place in the near future?

MINISTER in charge of the JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) Government will consider the matter.

Dog racing at Behala.

65. Dr. SANAULLAH: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to state whether the dog racing at Behala is continuing as before?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the difference between previous dog racing and the present one?

(*c*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the negative does the Hon'ble Minister contemplate starting a test case under the Gambling Act?

(*d*) If the answer to (*c*) is in the negative will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: (*a*) No.

(*b*) There is no totalisator or other betting during the races. (The only interest by the public in the results of the races is by means of daily forecast competition.)

(*c*) The matter is receiving Government's attention.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: With reference to answer (*a*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether dog racing is going on at Behala in any shape?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: It is not continuing as before but under altered circumstances.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what is the distinction between totalisation and forecast completion?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: I confess I do not know, but I am told that one is betting and the other is not.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any legal opinion has been obtained with regard to this method of completion of forecast?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Legal opinions have been taken, but the opinions differ and the matter is under the consideration of Government.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether there is a strong opinion against dog racing in general in whatever shape it may be?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The opinion is divided.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

29—Police.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 2,20,53,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "29—Police."

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs 100

Sir, I move this motion with a view to draw attention to the Government policy of incurring extra expenses on account of the war situation, or more correctly on the plea of the war situation. Sir, my purpose in moving this motion is to draw the attention of the House to the fact that at a time when, according to the existing conditions prevailing in the country, the people have been impoverished to an unprecedented degree it was expected that there should have been greater

economy effected in the administration of the province. Sir, here it will not be out of place to remind the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who on behalf of Government has moved this grant this year, of the fact that it was one of the pledges that the members of this Government and particularly the Hon'ble the Chief Minister had given four years ago to effect economies in the administration. One of the assurances given was, with a view to effect such economy, that the salaries of all high officials would be strictly limited and that even the salaries of Ministers would not be more than Rs. 500 per month, but in the course of four years we have seen that far from there being any serious attempt at economy being effected in the administration, more and more wastefulness has been encouraged and, Sir, the grants in the Police Department, the increase of expenditure on a plea such as the necessities of the war situation, show how utterly reckless the Government has been in respect of the assurance and promise about effecting economy. If there was anything for which the Government might have justifiably asked for money on account of the war situation, it would be for the purpose of helping those sections of the populace who, in direct and indirect ways, have been affected by the war. Sir, we find that the war situation has been pleaded for the purpose of increasing the expenditure, not in those departments or in those directions in which increase of expenditure might have been beneficial to the people, but the increase of expenditure has taken place in a direction which has been and more progressively is being every day more ruinous to our people. Sir, it is well known from Government's own admission that the people have been adversely affected directly on account of the war. Prices of commodities have risen, wages have either fallen or the cost of living has more steeply risen and untold suffering and hardship is being caused to the people. So, there has been a demand for war allowance. In those departments, Sir, we find that no such provision has been made. In the whole of the budgetary proposals this year, one looks in vain for any cognizance being taken of any such requirements of the people which have been voiced either for dear food allowance or for war bonus to workers. No provision has been made for such things. But, on the contrary, we find that the police grant has been increased on the plea of having to maintain law and order. It has been a chronic state of affairs in this province that there has been an extraordinary heavy expenditure on police account. That has been the order of the day all along. Only for a short while, that expenditure was cut down to some extent with the policy of releasing a large number of persons who were detained without trial for years and years; but what little good was done by the front door, the benefit of that was taken away by the back door again. We find that the plea of additional police expenditure being necessary has been held up with a view to increase police expenditure in the name of the war situation.

Now, Sir, on a previous occasion it was pointed out before this House that it was not a straightforward dealing, not a straight dealing that Government resorted to for the purpose of increasing this expenditure. In the first instance they held out the hope, the false hope, that these are extraordinary charges which were being imposed upon the provincial revenues for the time being and would be recoverable from the Government of India. Sir, if any expenditure was necessary to be incurred for needs which were properly speaking the needs of the Central Government, then, Sir, the right course for the Government of Bengal would have been in the interests of the people to tell the Government of India forthwith that if such additional expenditure should be incurred then the Government of India must make advances before such expenses were actually considered or incurred. Sir, we have heard that many schemes are not formulated or that formulated schemes are not put into operation for want of funds. Could not the Bengal Government, which comes forward time and again to raise such a plea in respect of matters which are directly beneficial to the people, have possibly told the Government of India,——"For want of funds we cannot satisfy your extraordinary and abnormal fancies about tightening the police stranglehold or expanding the apparatus of repression in the name of law and order. We cannot simply do it." If the Government of India advanced that fund, then the Government of Bengal might have considered in which direction to apply that fund for the purpose of ensuring law and order in its real sense. What are the facts, Sir? On the one hand, you are saying that as a result of the war people have been adversely affected in various ways. For instance, our jute market has been closed down directly and deliberately not in the interest of the people, but in the interest of the British warmongers. Our continental market has been closed. It was not impossible to retain a very big proportion of our jute export trade. We could have retained that market. It was possible to transport those jute exports to different countries in ships either under convoy or under neutral flags. Sir, England has been one of the minor customers of our export trade compared to continental countries. The continental market has been a market of much greater importance for India. Sir, directly in the interest of the British Government it was declared that the continental market should be stopped. The Indian cultivator, the Indian producer cannot send out his commodities for export to those places. Having done this, surely you take the responsibility for the consequence of your action. You ought to have realised that by that act of yours certain loss would be imposed on the Indian producers of raw materials. Therefore, the normal thing for the Government of India,. the only natural thing for the Government of India and for the Government of Bengal would have been to insist of the British Government—"If you want us to assist you and help you by stopping our export even at the risk of considerable financial loss, then, very well,

as you are spending huge sums of money for war purposes, grant us a subsidy amounting to a few lakhs or a few crores of rupees, so that that subsidy might be given as a recompense to the affected producers. Sir, then there would have been no reason for so much distress as has been imposed upon them to-day. This is the direct bearing of the war situation on Indian national economy, particularly on the financial condition of the people of Bengal. I ask the Hon'ble Chief Minister: Did the Government of Bengal even for a moment pause to consider any such proposal? Did the Government of Bengal even formulate any proposal to be presented to the Government of India or through the Government of India to the British Government with regard to some arrangement about recompense being granted to those who would be directly affected by the closing down of the export trade? Sir, you know that in view of the war, in very large industries, in the whole marine transport industry, all over England—all over the world—wages have been doubled, trebled and increased many times and this has entailed additional expenditure. That expenditure has been incurred because it was impressed upon the Government of every country that unless that additional expenditure necessitated by the needs of the war were incurred by them or some provision was made for that, Government could not get their services and assistance. Even the patriotic Englishmen whose country has been invaded do not help their own Government for nothing. Even the patriotic Englishmen are getting greater recompense in every form for every loss imposed on them. To persons detained without trial, whose homes are suffering in consequence, you are stinting about granting small concessions. In England, every home, every family, every child, who is affected by any member of that family going to the war or losing his life or being incapacitated, is assured in advance of a grant for the maintenance of that family. The expenditure on that account might go up to any amount. The British Government dare not curtail that expenditure. If the war situation needed incurring additional expenditure, it was in this direction. We find orders for sandbags coming to the jute mills; we find even in this war situation the extent of profiteering increasing from month to month, from year to year. We find war has given to these persons a windfall of augmented profits.

(At this stage the blue light was lit.)

Why blue light so soon, Sir?

Sir, that was the direction in which the Government might have given some thought for the purpose of effecting improvement by an increase of expenditure. But here what has been the effect of this increased police grant? In the first place, Government have to accept and acknowledge these two fundamental points: that if along with the beginning of the war, you find it so very difficult to maintain law and order inside the country by your normal machinery, then the only

inference for us to draw is that there is abnormal restlessness in the country, abnormal restlessness directly produced by the economic effects of the war for which the British Government are directly responsible and to which the Bengal Government by their acquiescence are a party. Only on account of callousness on their part, the Government have failed to tackle the economic situation or to give any redress to our affected people. The war has started in the theatres of war and at the same time war has started against our people who have been thrown into greater misery and privation inside the country by the recklessness of the British Government. Therefore, Sir, the Government, we find, are faced with the proposition of having to fight on two fronts, on the civilian front in the rear and on the war front outside. This police grant is a confession that India has not been a willing partner in the war, although the Government of Bengal have been a party to declaring their adherence to the British Government's war against the will of the people

(At this stage, the red lamp was lit.)

May I have a little extension of time, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: If everybody asks for extension of time, what am I to do? There are so many speakers.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: You have been good enough to allow extension of time on very many occasions under different grants.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think now I was wrong in doing that.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: I suggest- -

Mr. SPEAKER: It is such a long war and you cannot finish it in a few minutes. How long will you take to finish?

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: How much can you give? Please don't think I am bargaining. I think I shall be able to finish in a few minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER: All right.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: This increase in police expenditure has been devoted to increasing the staff of the extraordinary police force in this country. With the increase in the police force we have come to know of an increase of wanton police interference with the rural people which had absolutely no justification. I

would like to cite the case of Adampur in the district of Burdwan which is within the zemindary of one of the members of the present Cabinet. There, in October last suddenly we found the appearance of this extraordinary police, the stationing of the armed forces, and villagers were oppressed wholesale. In that village 600 cattle at least were seized by the police with a view to terrorise the general populace. About the incident at Adampur questions have been raised in this House. In Brahmanchak in the same month of October,——October, which seems to have assumed a significance on a world scale and is having its manifestations to-day also in Bengal, similar incidents have taken place. The name of Brahmanchak must figure prominently in public life and police administration in Bengal. Lately, it had been even regarded as a crime for any rural organiser or worker to bring to the notice of Government itself cases of ill-treatment of the people by the police or by the local oppressors. Sir, we find that section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code on top of the Defence of India Act is being promulgated on the people for no reason whatsoever. Sir, in Brahmanchak the manner in which the police preserved law and order could be demonstrated here by an exhibit which I wish to show to the members of this House. On another occasion I had an opportunity to give a brief narrative of what happened in that place. I do not wish to repeat what I said then. We visited Brahmanchak about three months after the occurrence. We found in every place that law and order was established by wholesale pillaging of the villagers. All their properties, the meagre properties of these villagers, were taken away. The people were assaulted, as on one occasion people were assaulted in Rajabazar, in their own homes at night time. I had the opportunity of visiting the homes of these affected people and I have, Sir, in my hand a piece of cloth of a peasant still stained with blood which would show what was done by the police for maintaining law and order in that area. This cloth might be taken note of by Government as evidence. I shall be prepared, if Government are willing to accept it, to present this cloth to them, so that they may go and make an enquiry on the spot itself and see the precise manner in which law and order is being maintained to-day.

Last but not the least, what is happening to-day? On the plea of law and order, Government are increasing the police grant

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move the motion that stands in my name, namely, that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100. The object of my motion is to raise a discussion on the desirability of financing the chaukidari costs from out of the provincial revenues.

Sir, the subject that I have tried to focuss through this motion of mine is one of the most concrete demands of this province, and that for a long time. When in the year 1938 in course of the budget discussion a similar cut motion was tabled and discussed on the floor of the House, the justness of the claim and the reasonableness of the demand were in so many words admitted by the Hon'ble the Home Minister, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, and that was because the motion which was moved at the instance of the Opposition received substantial support from all sections of this House. And I may remind you, Sir, that even one of the present Ministers, the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan, went into the Opposition lobby at that time——

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: But that was in another capacity.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: It may be in a different capacity, but the force of contention was so irresistible at that time that the Hon'ble the Home Minister was forced to admit the justness of the demand and he had to assure us on the floor of this House that a committee would be appointed with a view to going into this question as also the attendent and allied questions. Following that assurance of the Hon'ble Minister an *ad hoc* committee was composed consisting of various sections not only of this House, but also of the Upper Chamber, and on that committee certain very important Government officials were also represented. Sir, the committee was composed in July, 1938, and after that till July, 1940, different groups of that committee consisting of twenty members in all toured round the whole of Bengal with a view to ascertaining the public opinion behind this very important question and from time to time the committee sat upon the evidence that was collected and after mature and very considered deliberations I am glad to say that the committee arrived at decisions, I will not disclose the decisions, but I will go so far as to say that the committee arrived at almost a unanimous decision, only one member dissenting, being an official. The final report was submitted in July, 1940, and it was expected that even if the Government could not forthwith give effect to the recommendations that were formulated, still, as in the case of the other *ad hoc* committees like the Jute Enquiry Committee and the Paddy Committee and so on and so forth, Government would be good enough to publish and circulate the report for the information of the members of this Legislature; but that was not to be. What is more scandalous is that I myself tabled a question in the winter session last year and that question was mainly directed at getting information as to what were the recommendations of the committee with regard to the financial question of the chaukidari establishment. Not only was that question not answered in that

session, but that even to-day when the Budget Session is now on and has been sitting for such a protracted period, that question still remains unanswered. It is a scandalous affair, Sir, and it shows that the Government is still guilty of dilatoriness which has marked the Government's movement in every branch of administration. Sir, we on the Opposition have been attacked by the members of the Treasury Benches in season and out of season that we do not offer constructive criticism, but, Sir, what about this position when not only constructive effort was made by the Opposition but constructive suggestions were formulated by the combined wisdom of all sections of the two Houses of this Legislature; but the Government is not only not coming forward to implement the committee's recommendations but is also guilty of withholding those recommendations. The question is a very simple question as to whether the existing state of things, namely, that the union boards should finance the cost of the chaukidars, should continue or whether Government should take up the burden of this expenditure. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can tell for the information of the House that this demand of ours is not merely an isolated demand. Our demand has got the support of some of the major provinces in India. In the United Provinces, in Madras, in Bombay, the entire cost of the chaukidari force is met out of the general revenues as a part of the general police administration. And here also, Sir, there is an old cry, and a very reasonable cry, that the chaukidar being a part of the provincial police system, Government should look upon it as a part of the police administration and the cost incidental thereto should be a cost of the Police Department as a whole. If this reasonable contention was there so long, it has been stronger still to-day on account of the fact that the chaukidar is to-day not merely a policeman but also a man who has to deal with various administrative functions——

Mr. SPEAKER: As a residual officer?

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Yes, as you say, Sir, he is a residuray legatee, not in connection with the assets of Government but in connection with its liability. If a circle officer goes to a place, he has got to deal with him; if a thana officer goes, he has got to deal with him; if a sanitary inspector goes, he has got to deal with him; if a jute restriction officer goes, he has got to deal with him; so he has become, Sir, a vicarious underling of all the departments of our adiministration. He has sometimes to watch the railway lines and guard the Governor's special train and so on. So, Sir, it is all the more necessary that Government should take upon itself the burden of financing the chaukidari cost. I need hardly refer to the various stock arguments that have been advanced

from time to time regarding the justice of this cause. I will simply point out to the House the implications of the system if our recommendations are accepted. Under section 37 (*a*) of the Village Self-Government Act, the province of Bengal realises 57·81 lakhs of rupees for the maintenance of chaukidars, and under section 37 (*b*) of that Act, for village uplift and rural reconstruction work only Rs. 15,34,000 is collected; that is to say out of a total collection under section 37 more than 79 per cent. is spent for feeding this chaukidari force and only 21 per cent. of the blood of the poor people remains for nation-building activities. This is not only unjust but manifestly unfair. To-day in the days of provincial autonomy we stand by the slogan of nation-building activities; we talk of multifarious reliefs to the poor; and we think of village uplift by rural reconstruction work. But here is still this monstrosity that stands out as a legacy from the past, and the present does not give any indication of correcting this injustice of the past. If this entire money realised under section 37 (*a*) is released, what will be the effect? I have made a calculation in this way, Sir. It will mean that on an average every union board will get an extra sum of Rs. 1,200 per year; that is to say, every union board becomes able to pay Rs. 100 per month on rural reconstruction activity. Sir, what will be the effect of this hundred rupees more? I have made my own calculations. If you spend Rs. 25 you can get a very good doctor to look after a dispensary; even you can get an M.B. who will be prepared to go there if there is some outside practice. Then, Sir, with another Rs. 25 you can have two teachers—trained teachers—for Rs. 15 and Rs. 10 or Rs. 13 and Rs. 12 to look after and run a primary school and with the remaining Rs. 50 per month, that is, Rs. 600 per year, if you can undertake a plan and work for five years with Rs. 3,000, you can have sanitation and communication projects, you can sink tube-wells here and there and even more, you can undertake small irrigation works and things of similar description. And what is more, Sir, if the union boards, which are now unpopular on account of the burden of taxation, get the liberty of spending their own collection, they can even undertake increased assessment because they know that whatever increase there is will be justified by actual expenditure in the villages and in the union themselves. Therefore, we are advancing not only the considered opinion of certain sections of this House, we are advocating, we are voicing the desire and demand of the whole province of Bengal when we say that the union boards should be relieved forthwith of the burden of the chaukidari cost. The question naturally will arise as to how will this cost be met—a very pertinent question no doubt. But then, Sir, I will answer by quoting the examples of the United Provinces, Madras and Bombay. While it has been possible for the three major provinces of India to deal with the question and to take up the burden, I do not think Bengal can be

expected to lag behind, and if any constructive suggestions are necessary, I will say, Sir, that this cost can be met by undertaking works of retrenchment and thereby making large savings out of the provincial revenues.

In this connection, Sir, I may mention the jute export duty, 62½ per cent. of which is nowadays obtained by Bengal, practically a new acquisition which was not available before. We can tap this export duty on jute and out of this we can meet the chaukidari tax from the provincial revenues.

Then, Sir, there is another question, a very vexatious question—I should say intriguing question—which has been raised by Government. Government says, well, this question is allied with the other question of taxing the urban areas in connection with the police cost. Sir, our contention is clear. If it is possible to meet our rural demands by not taxing the urban people, that should be done by all means; but if that is not possible, then, Sir, an adjustment ought to be made between the urban and rural police costs because it is known that as against 57·8 lakhs of chaukidari cost in the villages, Rs. 57 lakhs are annually spent for maintaining police in the Calcutta Corporation and in the urban municipal areas. We must make an adjustment between the two. The rural people have so long undertaken and have borne the burden of taxation for the urban police and if in order to give relief to the rural people it is necessary to make the urban people contribute something for their uplift, I do not think the urban people will grudge that and the Government should come forward with a scheme very quickly.

Sir, before I conclude I will ask the Hon'ble Chief Minister, who is in charge of this department to-day, to explain why this matter is being held up after the committee had made its recommendation and how long it will take the Government to come to a considered decision. After all many things can wait, but rural Bengal cannot wait any longer. They are long fed upon hopes which had been given by the Government and by all sections of the Legislature who have come on definite election manifesto. If this pledge is not implemented, it will amount to a betrayal of the trust which they have reposed in us and, Sir, I appeal to the members of the Coalition Party to protect the Government from this monstrous betrayal of the pledge which has been given.

Mr. SYED ABDUL MAJID: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will only speak a few words in connection with this motion. There is a persistent demand from all sides that the cost of the Chaukidari establishment should be met out of the provincial revenues. The union boards have been spending about Rs. 54 lakhs a year for the maintenance of the chaukidari establishment in this province, but there is a

general impression in the country that the chaukidars have been of no use to the villagers. Instead of helping to maintain law and order in the village the chaukidars are generally accused of creating disorders in the village. ("Hear! hear!" from Congress benches.) At any rate, the opinion of the responsible people is that the number of chaukidars maintained by each union board is too many and the cost for maintaining the chaukidars is too heavy for the union boards to bear. The bulk of the tax realised by the union boards is spent towards the maintenance of the chaukidars and as such the boards cannot do the necessary works for the improvement of the village, for the establishment of dispensaries, for the construction of roads and for other nation-building works.

There is another very strong objection, Sir. Why the rural people should not pay for policing the rural areas is that the urban areas are not contributing anything towards the cost of maintaining police in the urban areas, and the entire cost, which amounts to about Rs. 44½ lakhs annually, is being paid from the porvincial revenues; that is to say, the rich people are being protected and their lives and properties are being made secure at the cost of the poor villagers. This is one of the greatest injustice, which has been done to the rural people for the welfare and happiness of the rich people of the towns and of municipal areas, and such injustice, Sir, can no longer be tolerated. Something, therefore, must be done to redress the long-felt grievance of the rural people. The members of the Coalition Party, and of other parties also I must say, have been urging upon the Government of the extreme necessity of doing something in this direction. They have urged upon the Government to exempt the rural people from the obligation of paying for the chaukidars and the Government, as we all know, appointed a committee as long ago as the 9th July, 1938, a committee consisting of the members of both the Houses including myself and also some high officials of Government. These members made an all-Bengal tour by batches. They went to different districts, they inspected the union boards, they inspected the thanas and held inspections of the parades of the chaukidars and also examined gentlemen, officials and non-officials, on this question. After due deliberations and mature consideration of all the facts that were available to them, they submitted a report, a very exhaustive report I must say, in July, 1940. But unfortunately the recommendations of the committee have not yet seen the light of day. Of course, at this stage, it will not be proper on my part to divulge the recommendations of the committee, but I can say this much that the recommendations, if given effect to, are calculated to go a great deal to relieve the rural people from the obligation of paying the chaukidari tax and also to improve the status and position of the chaukidari force. Sir, I do not know whether there is any reason why the Government have not yet

published the report or come to any decision. We shall be very glad to know from the Government when we can expect the publication of the report or the decision of Government on the recommendations that have been made in the report. We have almost come to an end of our term. I do not know what will happen to the reports of various other committees that were appointed by Government. Many committees appointed by Government have not yet submitted their reports. But this Chaukidari Committee submitted their report and that was a long time ago. We expected, the people expected, that the Government would do something on the recommendations that were submitted by the committee. On this matter rural Bengal are looking forward with great anxiety, and they are looking to Government to see how far they are going to relieve the people from this burden of taxation which has been so very heavy.

Now, Sir, I can only appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge to-day to see that very early steps are taken to give effect to the recommendations of the committee and satisfy all concerned in this matter.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

সভাপতি মহোদয়—আমার প্রস্তাবের উদ্দেশ্য হোচ্ছে এই যে চৌকিদার ও দফাদার-দের মাহিনা Union Board থেকে না দিয়ে প্রাদেশিক গভর্ণমেণ্টের তহবিল থেকে দেওয়ার ব্যবস্থা করা হউক। যদিও এই ধরণের একটা প্রস্তাব কংগ্রেস দলের মাননীয় সদস্য শশাঙ্কবাবু move কোরেছেন তবুও আমি এই প্রস্তাব move কোরছি এই জন্য যে আমাদের কৃষক প্রজা দলের পক্ষ থেকে এই Assemblyর বাইরে বহু সভাসমিতি কোরে এই ধরণের প্রস্তাব পাশ কোরে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে জানান হোয়েছে এবং আমার মনে হয় প্রত্যেক জেলার Union Board Associationএর পক্ষ থেকেও তাদের সর্ব্বসম্মতিক্রমে এই প্রকার প্রস্তাব কোরে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে জানান হোয়েছে। ইতি-পূর্ব্বে এখানে যাঁরা বক্তৃতা কোরেছেন তাঁদের কথায় জানা গেছে গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে Chow-kidari Enquiry Committee কোরেছিলেন যদিও তার রিপোর্ট এখনও বের হয় নাই তবুও সেই Committeeর মেম্বরদের অভিমত আমাদের প্রস্তাবের অনুকূলে সেটা জানতে পেরেছি। কিন্তু বর্ত্তমান মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী জনমতকে অগ্রাহ্য কোরে বরাবর Coalition দলের আওতায় থেকে নিজেদের মতলব মত চোলেছে। আমি বোলতে চাই চৌকিদার এবং দফাদারদের বেতন প্রাদেশিক গভর্ণমেণ্টের তহবিল থেকে না দেওয়ার যুক্তি কোথায়। এবারকার Budget আলোচনা কোর্লে দেখা যায় Policeএর জন্য ব্যয় বরাদ্দ ২,৩৮,৪৫,০০০ টাকা ধরা হোয়েছে। এর মধ্যে Presidency বা সহরের পুলিশের জন্য ৪৫,৮৪.৬০০ টাকা এবং তন্মধ্যে কলিকাতা পুলিশের জন্য ৩৪,১৬,০০০ টাকা ধরা হোয়েছে। এমনকি Railway Policeএর জন্যও ৩,৯৩,৮০০ টাকা ধরা হোয়েছে।

সভাপতি মহোদয়, এখন আমার বক্তব্য এই যে কলিকাতার শান্তি রক্ষার জন্য যে লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা খরচ করা হোচ্ছে তার একটা অংশ কলিকাতা কর্পোরেশনের বহন করা উচিৎ কারণ কর্পোরেশনের বার্ষিক কোটি কোটি টাকা আয় হয় এবং এখানে অনেক ধনী লোকের বাস। তারপর Railway Companyগুলির সাহায্যের জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট প্রায় ৪ লক্ষ টাকা খরচ কোরছেন। একথা সকলেই স্বীকার কোরবেন যে Railway Companyগুলি প্রতি বৎসর কোটি কোটি টাকা লাভ করে। যারা এত টাকা লাভ কোরে থাকে তাদের সুবিধার জন্য আমি পূর্ব্বেই বলেছি বাংলার গভর্ণমেণ্ট প্রায় ৪ লক্ষ টাকা খরচ কোরছেন। কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় পল্লীর জনসাধারণের শান্তি রক্ষার জন্য চৌকিদার নামে যে পুলিশ রোয়েছে তাদের খরচ গভর্ণমেণ্ট দিতে রাজী নন। এই খরচ বহন করবার ভার পোড়েছে পল্লীর গরীব Union Boardগুলির উপর। পল্লী অঞ্চলের খবর যাঁরা রাখেন তাঁরা স্বীকার কোরবেন পল্লী-বাসীদের কি কষ্টের ভিতর বসবাস করতে হয়। তাদের চলার রাস্তা ঘাটের সুবিধা নেই। রোগে ঔষধের ব্যবস্থা এবং ডাক্তার খানার ব্যবস্থা নেই। পানীয় জলের অভাবে গ্রামে কত মহামারী দেখা দিচ্ছে তার ইয়ত্তা নাই। আজ যদি Union Boardএর উপর থেকে চৌকিদারদের বেতনের চাপ উঠিয়ে দেওয়া যায় তাহোলে Union Boardগুলি পল্লী অঞ্চলে অনেক জনহিতকর কার্য্য কোরতে পারে। Union Boardগুলি অনেক সময় গরীব জনসাধারণের ঘটি বাটি বিক্রয় কোরে যে tax আদায় করে, সেই taxএর ১৪ আনাই চোলে যায় চৌকিদার ও দফাদারদের বেতন দিতে। বাকী ২ আনার দ্বারা তারা জনহিতকর কার্য্য কি কোরবে? আমার মনে হয় এই প্রস্তাবে কারও দ্বিমত নাই। ইতিপূর্ব্বে Coalition দলের Syed A. Majid যে বক্তৃতা কোরেছেন তাতে বোঝা গেছে তিনিও এই প্রস্তাব সমর্থন করেন। আমি অবশ্য কাউকে আক্রমণ কোত্তে চাইনা, তবু বোলব Coalition দলের কারও যদি বুকের পাটা থাকে তবে এই প্রস্তাবের বিরুদ্ধে বক্তৃতা করুন, অন্যথায় আমার প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে ভোট দিবেন।

Mr. SPEAKER : I think you are challenging the Coalition members.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED : No Sir. I am stating the facts. সভাপতি মহোদয়, তারপর চৌকিদাররা দোষত্রুটি কোরলে Union Boardএর ক্ষমতা নেই তাদের পদ-চ্যুত করার এবং তাদের নিযুক্ত করবারও ক্ষমতা নেই। এইখানে বোলতে চাই তারা শুধু চাষের মালিক গ্রাসের মালিক নয়। এরচেয়ে অবিচারমূলক কোন ব্যবস্থা থাকতে পারে বোলে আমি জানিনা। আমার এই প্রস্তাব সম্বন্ধে জনমত অতি প্রবল তা ইতিপূর্ব্বেই দেখান গেছে এখানে যাঁরা পল্লীবাসীর ভোট নিয়ে এসেছেন, তাঁরা বলে এসেছেন পল্লীবাসীদের উপকার কোর্ব্ব। কিন্তু উপকার কোর্ব্ব বোললেই উপকার হবেনা। তার জন্য প্রকৃত পক্ষে কাজ করতে হবে। আমার এই প্রস্তাব যদি আপনারা সকলে মিলে গ্রহণ করেন, যদি চৌকিদার এবং দফাদারদের বেতনের টাকাটা Union Board Fundএ বেচে যায়, তাহোলে Union Boardগুলি জনসাধারণের অনেক উপকার কোর্ত্তে পার্ব্বে। কাজেই আপনাদের অনুরোধ করি আপনারা এই প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করুন। আমি জানি গভর্ণ-মেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে কি উত্তর দেওয়া হবে। হয়ত গভর্ণমেণ্ট উত্তর দেবেন, বর্ত্তমান

বাজেট deficit Budget কাজেই চৌকিদারদের বেতন যোগান গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষে সম্ভব নয়। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি বাস্তবিকই একথা মনে করেন তাদের পক্ষে চৌকিদারের বেতন দেওয়া সম্ভব না তা হোলে আমি বোলব চৌকিদার এবং দফাদারদের পদ উঠিয়ে দেওয়া হোক। এদের দ্বারা বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের কোনই উপকার হয়না। অনেক সময় শুনা যায় চৌকিদাররা চোর, বদমাসদের সঙ্গে ষড়যন্ত্র কোরে পল্লীবাসীর সর্ব্বনাশ কোরে থাকে। বাংলার জনসাধারণ taxএর উপর tax দিয়ে নিজেদের দৈন্য টেনে আনছে অথচ উপকার কিছুই হবে না একথা কিছুতেই যুক্তি সঙ্গত হোতে পারে না। কেবল লাট সাহেবের রাস্তা পাহারার জন্য, S. D. O. মফঃস্বলে গেলে তাঁর সঙ্গে ঘুরে বেড়াবার জন্য এবং দারোগার হুকুম তামিল করবার জন্য যে সব চৌকিদার দফাদারদের রাখা হোয়েছে তাদের বেতন গভর্ণমেণ্ট কেন দেবেন না তা বুঝিনা। মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী যখন মফঃস্বলে সভা সমিতি করেন তখন দেখা যায় সভাস্থল চৌকিদারদের কাল পাগড়ীতে ভরে গেছে। সারাদিন না খেয়ে এই সব চৌকিদার দফাদাররা মন্ত্রীদের সুখ সুবিধার জন্য ব্যস্ত থাকে। আজ এই সম্পর্কে আমি আর বেশী সময় নিতে চাইনা। আমি বাজেটের সাধারণ আলোচনার সময় যে কথা বোলেছিলাম সেই কথার পুনরুল্লেখ কোরতে চাই। Coalition member যাঁরা আছেন আমার বিশ্বাস তাঁরাও অনেকেই জনসাধারণের মঙ্গল চান। তার প্রমান স্বরূপ তাঁদের নিকট অনুরোধ কচ্ছি তাঁরা এই প্রস্তাবটিকে ভোট দিয়া সমর্থন করুন। তা না কোরলে বুঝবো নিজ স্বার্থের জন্য মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর পিছনে ঘুরাই আপনাদের কাজ। কারণ এটা জনসাধারণের কাজ। মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর দলে যতদিন বেশী মেম্বর থাকবেন শত চেষ্টা সত্বেও তাঁরা বাংলার জনসাধারণের উপকার কোর্ত্তে চাইবেন না। আজ জনসাধারণের মঙ্গলজনক কাজ যদি কোর্ত্তে চান তা হোলে হয় মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর উপর চাপ দিয়ে জনসাধারণের মঙ্গলজনক কাজ আদায় করুন নইলে দল বেঁধে কৃষক প্রজার দলে যোগ দিয়া কৃষক প্রজা দলের শক্তি বৃদ্ধি করুন দেখবেন মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী জনসাধারণের মঙ্গল জনক কাজ কোর্ত্তে বাধ্য হবেন। আমার কথা শুনে খাজা নসরুল্লা সাহেব চেচাচ্ছেন। আমি জানি যে যদি কৃষক প্রজাদল শক্তিশালী হয় তাহোলে ঢাকার খাজা দলের দুর্গ একদিনে ভেঙ্গে যাবে। তাদের মাতব্বরী আর থাকবেনা। তাদের জমিদারী তো যাওয়ার মুখেই চোলেছে। একমাত্র গভর্ণমেণ্টের পোষ্য পুত্র হিসাবেই তাঁরা মাতব্বরী কোরছেন তা চোলে যাবে। Nasarulla সাহেবের চিৎকারের সঙ্গে কারও sympathy নেই। যারা পল্লী অঞ্চলে বাস করেন তাঁরা জানেন সেখানকার লোকেরা কিরূপ অসুবিধার মধ্যে বাস করে। সেখানকার লোকেরা কলেরা, ম্যালেরিয়া প্রভৃতি রোগে যখন ছটফট কোর্ত্তে থাকে অথচ ৮।১০ খানা গ্রামের মধ্যে তখন একজনও ডাক্তার পাওয়া যায় না। সহর থেকে ডাক্তার আনবার ক্ষমতা তাদের নাই। ম্যালিরিয়ায় হাজার হাজার লোক মরে যাচ্ছে অথচ কুইনাইন পর্য্যন্ত তারা পায় না। সেখানে বড় রকমের রাস্তা নেই বোললেই চলে। বর্ষাকালে তাদের হাট বাজারে যাবার জন্য সামান্য গামছা পোরে জল কাদা ভেঙ্গে যেতে হয়। ইহার প্রতিকার করে তাদের সুবিধা বিধানের জন্য আমাদের Union Boardগুলি বিশেষ খরচ কোর্ত্তে পারে না। তারা লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা ট্যাক্স বাবদ জনসাধারণের কাছ থেকে আদায় করে অথচ পল্লীবাসীর কোন উপকার কোর্ত্তে পারে না। কারন প্রায় সব

টাকাই চৌকিদার দফাদারের বেতন বাবদ চলে যায়। কাজেই আমার অনুরোধ আমার প্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করে পল্লীবাসীর উপকারের ব্যবস্থা করুন।

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, I do not speak unless I feel that I must speak. This evening my mind is too heavy, due to what I have heard from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, and what I heard on the 'phone has stung me to the quick. I feel that it is almost humanly impossible for me to stay on here, and possibly it would be difficult for me to persuade myself to go to the lobby also if any division is called. (Cries of "Hear! hear!" from the Opposition Benches.) It is a serious matter, and no rejoicing from the other side is necessary. I tell you it is a serious moment, and I am making a serious statement. What has taken place in Dacca and what I have learnt of the incidents happening there—the demolition of mosques, not one——

Mr. SPEAKER: May I remind you that we are not discussing that question here now. Please confine your remarks to the motion relating to the cost of chaukidari establishment.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: I only want an assurance, Sir, from the Hon'ble the Chief Minister that an incident like this may not happen any more, and I will not digress upon that point any further. I simply ask—the police is there, and what had they been doing there?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. My advice to both sides of the House is that in view of the statement that has been made by the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, and in view of the fact that the incident is still going on and has not yet come to an end, it is only desirable that the matter should not be discussed on the floor of the House at this stage. I am quite prepared to give the fullest facilities to the members of the House at an opportune moment later on to discuss this matter if the Hon'ble the Chief Minister agrees. Members will perhaps agree with me that if we make any statement at this stage, it might have an adverse effect on the situation which is already very serious. We have also a responsibility in this matter, and I would therefore appeal to members on both sides of the House not to refer to this matter at this stage.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Sir, you would have allowed this matter if it had come as an adjournment motion from the other side?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. But I have made it clear repeatedly throughout that in a matter of this character I am most reluctant to admit it.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, my only submission is that I intended to refer only to that aspect of the question which related to the conduct of the police. In this connection I will not digress into anything else. I will not attribute motive to any community or any section of the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can make your choice.

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, in the budget no less than Rs. 50 lakhs has been provided for expenditure on police in Dacca and——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry I must interrupt you. I say again that it is entirely for you to make a choice. Admitting for the sake of argument that the police is entirely wrong and that the police conduct has not been correct, the fact remains that at this stage the police is in charge of a most responsible duty. Do you think that this is the time when you should say anything against the police or that the police has failed in its duty?

Maulvi AHMED ALI MRIDHA: Sir, my attitude is like this. Let any number of people fall on me, beat me, and kill me, but demolition of mosques is another matter altogether. Sir, a mosque is very dear to me, and I would like to point out that it is the special duty of the police to see to its protection. If the Hon'ble Minister has taken sufficient steps by this time, let us be apprised of it. If no steps have been taken, let us know it and let us get an assurance that such steps are going to be taken, and we may remain satisfied, and have peace of mind. In this view, Sir, I started my speech; otherwise there was no necessity for it. I won't criticise any community or any section thereof, but my object is just to see that effective steps are taken at this moment, that is to say, that mosques are not demolished in the manner in which they have been done. So far as the injuries of the people and the death of persons are concerned, I do not care just now, because that is entirely a different matter. But, Sir, a mosque is a religious institution and as such is so sacred and held in such esteem by us that it should not be dealt with like that. That is my only submission. I hope that an assurance will be given by the Hon'ble Minister on this score, and then I will be satisfied.

Then, Sir, there is another point also. Because of your insistence, I am restraining myself in my speech and I obey you. Then, Sir, I digress to another point. I have to say that I entirely subscribe to the view that has been taken by my friend Mr. Syed Abdul Majid when he says that the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee's Report should at once be published and the recommendations therein should be implemented

by suitable legislation. I say, Sir, that the poorer section of the populace live in villages, and it is an irony of fate that the poor people who live in villages, who are incapable of paying any tax generally, have to pay for the village police; while the rich people who can be expected to make their contributions for the improvement of the society as a whole have to pay nothing for the town police. In the past what has taken place is that the poor people had to pay for the service for which rich people had not been called upon to pay, and this is being continued from time immemorial. The people who were at the head of the administration rode roughshod over the feelings of the people, and never cared to see whether justice was done to any section of the people or not. If we compare the population in towns and the population in the villages we shall find that the bulk of the people live in the village side. Injustice is continuing for long, long years. If rich people do not pay for policing the towns, then the village people should not be made to pay for policing the villages. A grave injustice is being perpetrated since time immemorial, and this has been pointed out—not generally by the people themselves, but by our leaders now occupying the Treasury Benches here. We have got this lesson from our leaders which has proved to be a correct lesson. We have been waiting for a very long time. This waiting has become too much. We have waited and waited. Four years have already passed. We are in the midst of the fifth budget. Now our death-knell is ringing. (Cries of "Oh! Oh!" and laughter from the Opposition Benches.) I do not know whether we shall go back to the countryside with the same say, namely, that no justice has been done. Half-hearted justice will not do. My insistent demand is that justice must be done. Every section of the populace must get a fair play. What I mean is that when the town people have enjoyed the benefit for long years, let them now pay. Enable now the poor people to feel that justice has been done to them. In other words, Sir, let not the poorer people be saddled with the chaukidari tax any more. Let them get an additional benefit also by grants from the State, so that it might be sufficient compensation for the past. I believe that the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee has made suitable recommendations so far as this question is concerned. On behalf of the rural folk, I say, Sir, that justice must be meted out very quickly.

I need not repeat what my friend Mr. Majid had said, and I wholeheartedly support what he has said.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. PUSPAJIT BARMA: Sir, I rise to support the cut motions moved by my honourable friends Mr. Sasanka Shekhar Sanyal and Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed. The demand that the cost of chaukidars of the

province should be met out of provincial revenue is not a new demand, but an old one. Two views have been advanced by the advocates of the demand, that the cost of chaukidars should be paid out of provincial revenue. One and the extreme view is that while municipal areas are getting the service of the police without paying any police tax, why then the union boards should bear the cost of chaukidars for their services. The second and the moderate and reasonable view is that the rural people are overburdened with taxes and therefore there cannot be any further tax for the improvement of villages for which the people are clamouring so much. So, the villagers cannot be taxed any further under any name and for any purpose whatsoever, and the amount of tax that they pay to union boards for the cost of chaukidars now must be utilised for the village improvement works, the chaukidari force being maintained out of provincial revenue. This demand of the poor villagers was considered by Government as reasonable and in the year 1938 they appointed a committee called the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee consisting of officials and members of both Houses of the Legislature. The members of the committee made a tour throughout the province to enquire into the matter. During their tour they discussed the main demand of the people with the representatives of all local bodies and officials of each and every district. The committee after two years of hard labour and considered deliberation submitted to the Government an unanimous report except one member, which is satisfactory. The entire cost of the chaukidars of the province is near about Rs. 55 lakhs. It the union boards are relieved of the cost of chaukidars, then the money so released may be utilised by them for the village improvement works for which the villages are suffering very much, such as dispensaries, roads, water-works, etc. The question is how can this money be found for these purposes? There are people who are of opinion that money for these purposes must be realised by taxing the people living in municipal areas who are not now paying any tax for police patrol. Sir, the Chaukidari Committee submitted their report about a year ago, but Government have not circulated the report to the members of the Legislature as yet. Sir, the demand that the cost of chaukidars be paid out of provincial revenue is not unreasonable, and it is supported by the practice in other major provinces such as Bombay, Madras, Bihar and the United Provinces. They have met the entire cost of chaukidars out of the provincial revenue, so we wonder why this cannot be possible in Bengal. Sir, much has been said about this matter on the floor of the House to-day, but we want to know from the Hon'ble Minister what definite steps he is going to take so that the cost of the chaukidars may be met out of the provincial revenue. Sir, the poor villagers cannot pay any further taxes for the improvement of their villages, so it is urgently necessary for the Government to pay the chaukidari costs from the provincial revenue and allow union boards to spend that amount of money—the entire cost

of the chaukidars now payable by them—for the village uplift work. Sir, we want to have a definite answer from the Hon'ble Minister to-day, and we appeal to him to take a definite step so that the demand may be met from the provincial revenue as early as possible. With these words, Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. I. A. CLARK: Sir, I rise to support the main motion now before the House.

Money spent on the maintenance of law and order is money well spent and, if and when the revenues of this province expand, then I say that more and not less money should be spent on the police force.

Sir, when we look round this city of Calcutta we view with pride the magnificent buildings erected in recent years or now rising towards the sky in such areas as Clive Street, Chowringhee Square and Chittaranjan Avenue, but do we ever pause to consider or to examine the foundations of these edifices, on the strength of which the whole stability of the buildings depends? In the same way the stability of our nation-buildings—education, public health, co-operation and the like—depends upon the strength of the foundations which we give them in the shape of law and order. Unless we can assure to the people of this province peaceful conditions and the protection of the law as they go about their daily tasks, we cannot hope to make any permanent progress in nation-building.

The first essential for the maintenance of law and order is an adequate, contented and efficient police force and to ensure this we must not only recruit and train the right type of men, but we must also give them adequate pay and decent conditions to live in.

I would like to suggest that we view the expenditure on police from this point of view. Year after year we are told in this House that too much money is being spent, while at the same time the police are accused of inefficiency and abuses. To my mind the real question is whether we are prepared to pay the cost of an efficient police force.

Can anyone with any experience of the mufassal say that our police force is adequate in numbers? If we look at the official report of the Inspector-General of Police for 1939 we find that the total sanctioned strength of the civil police for that year was a little over 25,000 men and the area of the districts was 72,481 square miles, that is, one man to every 2·8 square miles. These figures speak for themselves, especially as it is to be noted that the figures are for municipalities and rural districts combined. I am told that in some districts there are only 10 men to 100 square miles. The inadequacy of the Bengal Police Force in point of numbers, moreover, is accentuated by the fact that in many districts communications are very poor and, in some parts of the country, almost non-existent. In many parts of the country there are few roads and no railways, and in many of the

thanas the only means of communication is by boat. At a great many thanas there are no telephones, and it may be noted that in 1939 out of 639 police-stations 271 were still not within easy reach of a telegraph office. In some cases the nearest telegraph office was as much as 40 miles from the police-station. It is easy to visualise what this might mean if serious trouble were to arise, and obviously this lack of means of communication does not make for efficiency of police administration. I hope that honourable members of this House who criticise the efficiency of the police will bear these facts in mind and will be prepared to vote more money for the purpose of the improvement of communications as soon as funds are available.

I have referred to the importance of giving the police adequate pay and decent conditions to live in if the force is to be contented and efficient. The experience of the members of my Party as employers of labour is that the workers are quite content with moderate pay, provided that the conditions under which they live are reasonably comfortable, that there are proper facilities for their treatment when they are sick, and decent quarters for them to live in. It is clear from a perusal of the Inspector-General's Report to which I have referred that in neither of these particulars is the situation of the Bengal force by any means satisfactory. With regard to housing conditions he said, "In many places the housing conditions continue to be unsatisfactory," and he then quoted the following remarks made by the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Presidency Range: "More has been done during the year to improve the housing of the force, but much more remains to be done before it can be said that the force is adequately or sufficiently housed. I know from personal inspection that there are police buildings which are a disgrace to any civilised force."

I, that is, I, a member of this House, may inform the House that as a Special Constable of the Calcutta Police I recently attended a series of personally conducted tours of various thanas in Calcutta and its suburbs. On some of these tours we were conveyed from thana to thana in a police van, commonly known as a "black maria." I am sure that my honourable friend Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar will regard this as a peculiarly suitable type of vehicle for the conveyance of profiteers and exploiters, the class from which the Special Constables are mainly recruited. As a result of that tour, Sir, I have come to the definite conclusion that there is room for a great deal of improvement in the condition of many of the thanas in Calcutta and its suburbs and, I think, the House will agree with me that the condition of many of the thanas in the mufassal is even worse.

As regards sickness, the Inspector-General remarks that a large number of officers and men of the subordinate ranks of the force were unable to do their duty on account of sickness and from statistics

obtained from the districts it appeared that Government suffered the loss of the services of about 1,395 officers and men a day through sickness, or an annual figure of 5,09,118 man-days. He also says that there are several police-stations and outposts in the province which have no dispensaries and, in consequence, the officers and men have to be brought to headquarters for treatment, often when really unfit to travel. It would accordingly appear to be obvious that facilities for the police force are not what they should be, and it is highly significant that when we examine the figures for retirement and sickness we find—I again quote from the official report for 1939—that only 23·1 per cent. of the men who retired during that year had completed the full term of 30 years' service.

In the opinion of my Party, Sir, it is unfair to criticise the efficiency of the police unless we are prepared to vote more money to remedy these conditions. Many honourable members, for example, criticise the efficiency of the police in the detection of crime. The first necessity, if there is to be improvement in this respect, is that the police, and particularly the sub-inspectors, should receive training in modern and scientific methods of detection. The Detective Training School was closed down in 1931 and with it all facilities for instruction in advanced methods of police work were removed. If we want an improvement in detection of crime, then we must be prepared to vote the funds for the reopening of a training school in which officers and men can receive special and advanced scientific training in the detection of crime. The report for 1939 makes it quite clear that the only reason why this has not been done has been lack of funds.

I would like to conclude, Sir, by stressing the importance of good relations between the police and the public. In advanced countries the policeman is not only the arm of the law, but he is also the friend and servant of the public. Good relations between the police and the public are not only desirable in themselves, but the efficiency of the police in the detection and prevention of crime depends in a large measure on the co-operation and assistance they receive from the public. Every effort should be made, in my opinion, to obtain the co-operation and help of the union boards and villagers in the campaign against crime. It is pleasant to note that in 1939 no fewer than 26,688 co-operation meetings were held, including 4,012 between the police and presidents and members of union boards, and 21,620 with the villagers. This, Sir, is I think progress on the right lines, and I hope there will be increasing activity along these lines. With these words I beg to support the main motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Hon'ble Chief Minister will now reply.

(Mr. Ahmed Hosain rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry. I have allowed one speech from this side (indicating the Opposition) and one speech from that side (indicating the Coalition). I am helpless if more members want to speak at this stage.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Yes, Sir, the result will be that other motions will be shut out.

Mr. SPEAKER: Naturally.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: It is for you to decide what you will do in that case.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hosain, you should realise my difficulty. I have allowed alternately speeches from this side (indicating the Opposition) and the other side.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Sir, certain Opposition members tried to challenge the Coalition members, and I want to give a reply.

Mr. SPEAKER: It is very difficult.

Mr. ABDUR RAHMAN SIDDIQI: Sir, may I rise again and submit that this has not been a satisfactory arrangement? You have yourself seen that many more members from this side want to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: How could you come to the conclusion that it is not satisfactory? I have allowed members to speak alternately from either side. However, Mr. Ahmed Hosain, you may speak.

Mr. AHMED HOSAIN: Sir, my friends Mr. Syed Abdul Majid and Maulvi Ahmed Ali Mridha have spoken on behalf of the Coalition Party. We want immediate publication and implementing of the recommendations of the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee and we are urging the Government for that. Sir, we are really glad to find that one Opposition member at least this time has made useful suggestions calculated to bring the urgent and long-sought-for relief to the rural masses. We are all the more glad that Babu Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal has expressed his willingness to bear some of the burden of police cost on behalf of the urban people whom he and his party mostly represent. This really is a happy augury, and we expect that such behaviour will come forth from him and others of his party when Government goes to give effect to the recommendations of the Chaukidari Enquiry Committee after it is published.

Sir, one Krishak Proja member has tried to play to the gallery by challenging the Coalition members to oppose the motion. Sir, I may say this much for his edification, that we on this side of the House have always urged the Government to reform the Chaukidari system and to relieve the rural masses from the taxation, and it is at our instance that the Government appointed a committee. (Cries of "Oh!, oh!" and laughter from the Opposition Benches and cries of "Hear! Hear!" from the Coalition Benches.) I also say this for his edification that whatever Government does, it does at the instance of the Coalition Party, because they command the greatest number of votes in the House and they can carry in the House whatever they decide. This House is only a registering body, so to say, of the decisions of the Coalition. It is useless to throw such challenge and try to expose the Coalition members to the public. The public know them and the public have fully realised the benefits that they have derived from the Government, and for the matter of that, from the Coalition Party. ("Hear! hear!" from the Coalition Benches.)

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Sir, I must begin by saying a few words in reply to the remarks made by my friend Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar who opened this debate and fired the first shot at the "Police" budget. His speech was a strange mixture of police activity and war operations. I must say, Sir, with all respect, that many of his remarks are irrelevant to the subject under discussion. But one thing he tried to make out and to which I want to refer very briefly in order to remove certain mis-apprehensions in the minds of members of the House regarding the apparently expensive budget which has been provided for the police. Sir, when we remember that it is a province with an area of about 80,000 square miles and a population in 1931 of 52 millions—I am now told that we are increasing by 22 millions—and that consequently Bengal is the most populous province in India, intersected by big rivers, some of which are biggest in the world and the communication system is very defective—when we remember all that—it is not difficult to realise that the police strength even in the midst of the rural population must be utterly useless for police activity even for an area of only 10 or 12 square miles. I remember a dacoity case in a village on the banks of the Padma and the police-station only seven miles from the scene of occurrence. Unfortunately, however, of these seven miles, six miles happened to be through the Padma river, and it takes nearly three hours even in normal times for one man to go from the village of occurrence to the police-station. By the time information could be lodged at the police-station and police help could arrive, people had been murdered, cattle had been slaughtered, houses had been burnt and not only was there no relief given, but it was impossible for the police to take up investigation until long after the occurrence was

over. This is not a stray occurrence. Not because the police are not willing to render assistance, but because their number is too small. The facilities for communication are inadequate and insufficient, and it is not possible for the police force of the province to cope with the duties which are sometimes thrown on their shoulders by abnormal conditions. Take the case of what occurred only about a fortnight ago at Bhola, a subdivision in the district of Bakarganj. There was a small fracas between one party of Hindus and one party of Muslims on account of the sprinkling of coloured water during the Holi festival. It led to an exchange of hot words and exchange of blows. Immediately crowds gathered from all sides, and there was free fighting in the streets. The small police force there was soon overpowered. *Hâts* were looted, and we were told that cows were sacrificed and all sorts of things were done. The police in many places were entirely at the mercy of the infuriated mobs. Consider again the case of what is happening at Khulna. Wherever there is an occurrence, the police rush up and by the time they reach the place, something else occurs elsewhere and they rush up there. In this way they go on running about from place to place and thus a situation arises owing to local and other conditions which it is entirely impossible to control. I submit, therefore, that instead of remarking that the "Police" budget is too high, I am inclined to think that it would be a good criticism to make that the Government have not provided more funds for the police. The police in number must be increased. Take the case of housing accommodation of the police. I have visited many places, and I have found that the housing accommodation is entirely inadequate and insufficient. On one occasion, I went to inspect the police-station at the headquarters of the Dinajpur district. It was a thatched building with *kutcha* plinth. It was the rainy season, and as I was sitting in a room looking into the papers, the rain water had rushed into the room and frogs began to play at my feet. That is the kind of thing that is happening. In my own district I have seen police-stations where there are no arrangements for good drinking water. I heard my friends of the Opposition making ironical remarks that the "Police" budget should be increased. I do not mean to say——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: What a contrast to Fazlul Huq of the previous days!

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: The world has changed in 50 years. The population of Bengal has doubled and therefore the police needs have also got to be looked into. The same Fazlul Huq remains, but circumstances have changed and not the man. I will just point out how there is no inconsistency.

I certainly agree with my friends that money should not be wasted, but money should be spent if money is required, and I maintain that

with the increase in population and with the increase in the needs of the people, the protection that we give should also be sufficient and adequate. Now, Sir, the whole difficulty arises from the fact that the police are very unpopular, because they have got to do executive duties, and in the discharge of their duties they perform many an act which is unpleasant. Formerly the police had a bad reputation also which I know is gradually disappearing and vanishing. My friend is shaking his head, but I cannot deal with gestures and general remarks. Now, whatever that may be, whether the "Police" budget is high or low, there is no doubt that under the present conditions the number of the police force is not adequate. More money is required for enlisting more men at the present moment. As I was saying, the police at the present moment in Dacca are unable to cope with the situation on account of the vastness of the area, the suddenness of the operations and the various methods that are employed by the rioters. In circumstances like these, we require more and more police. It may be that under normal conditions the present strength of the police force is sufficient, but abnormal conditions require more men, more force, and more effective measures in order to cope with the situation. Most unfortunately, in this country abnormal conditions are becoming the order of the day. We are having communal riots. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Who is responsible?) Hindus are responsible and Muslims are also responsible, but not the Europeans. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: What about you?) I am responsible for everything, and you are all innocent. The question of apportionment of responsibility reminds me of a story in Greek mythology. When Jupiter created man, he gave him two bags with the direction that he should put his own faults in a bag and keep it in front and put the faults of others in the other bag and keep that at the back. But man did the reverse thing. He put the bag containing other peoples faults in front and that containing his own at the back. The result is that man does not see his own faults but only other people's faults. So, the Opposition members will never realise how far they are responsible for the state of things that are now prevailing in Bengal. I am not going to enter into any argument on this point. I submit that so far as the demand is concerned, it is justified by the circumstances.

Now, Sir, I come to the chaukidari matter. I am glad that the subject has been discussed at some length. I am here authorised by my colleagues to say that it is now the policy of the Government to see that the entire cost of the rural police may not fall on the rural people. That policy has been accepted. The report of the Chaukidari Committee has taken long in coming. I also admit that there has been some delay on the part of the Government in coming to a decision on the recommendations of that committee. Now we are considering the question. The financial aspect has got to be considered. It will

take some time, but not very long, before we come to some conclusion. As a matter of fact, I am in a position to say that we have taken up the matter and very soon we will be able to make known our decision. The decision will be made public, and then we will invite public opinion and public criticism. I hope that before long we will be able to decide what contributions to make from the provincial revenue for the upkeep of the rural police. It is only a question of proportion. Some say 50: 50, some say 2/3: 1/3 and others 3/4: 1/4. Some figure has got to be arrived at which will not be a burden on the provincial exchequer, and which will at the same time give relief to the rural population. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: The committee has given figures.) You will not have to wait long. As a matter of fact, both the members of the Opposition and the members of the Coalition Party are agreed that the matter should not be allowed to be delayed any further. So far as this question itself is concerned, the position is this, that the report is ready and the various departments of Government are being consulted, and very soon we will make known to the public not only the recommendations of the committee, but also the Government decision. But as I have already said, the House may take it that relief, and I hope considerable relief, will be given to the rural people and the contribution from the provincial revenue will not be inconsiderable. I do not think I need go into details, but once more I will ask my friends of the Opposition to remember that the stereotyped attack on the police should cease, and that there should be more appreciation of the work that is being done by a body of public servants who are subjected to criticism and seldom receive the commendation that is due to them for the duties they perform. It may be that the police are not quite up to our expectations, but possibly there are reasons why this remark still sticks to the police. There is no doubt, however, that conditions have improved in the matter of recruitment, and the standard is now much higher than it was many years ago. As regards corruption itself, I think I can say without contradiction that it is now much less than what it was before, and there are at the present moment in the police force honest officers whose integrity cannot be called in question. I submit that nothing is gained by continuous criticism without any word of appreciation——

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: What about the repression on political workers by the special police?

Mr. SPEAKER: That has not been discussed yet.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Now, Sir, I do not want to speak any longer, but I find Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar coming to this House. I may inform him that I had to make certain comments on his speech in his absence, and I hope I will be excused

if I could not withhold my observations although he was absent. I may tell Mr. Dutta Mazumdar that his remarks about the high-handedness of the police were not quite justified, and that I was trying to justify that the "Police" budget is not much too high, and that the expenditure is justified by the nature of the duties which the police are called upon to perform. It may be that there are differences of opinion, but I am sure there are members in this House who will agree with me, and that is my consolation. I never expect that there will be no difference of opinion, because that would make the Assembly a lifeless institution. There must be differences of opinion, and there must be remarks and criticisms.

I have got nothing further to add, and for the reasons that I have stated, I oppose the motion.

The cut motion of Mr. Niharendu Dutta Mazumdar that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think that as the cut motions of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal and Mr. Giasuddin Ahmad are of an identical nature, they can be taken up together.

The cut motions of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal and Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—31.

Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bhowmik, Dr. Gobinda Chandra.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra.
Chaudhuri, Rai Harendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Kunda, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Manirunzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain Mr.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Ramiruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Sen, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Shahedali, Mr.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

NOES—101.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hafiz, Mr. Mia.
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed.
Abdullah-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rashid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rashed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S.
Abdur Rauf Khan Bahadur Shah.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abdus Shahed, Maulvi Md.

Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hossain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Asrafali, Mr. M.
Asiad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Badruddoja, Mr. Syed.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry Bart.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Mr. Anukul Chandra.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Edber, Mr. Upendranath.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Huq, the Hon'ble Mr. A. K.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Gladding, Mr. D.
Golam Sarwar Hossini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Gomes, Mr. S. A.
Griffiths, Mr. G.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Haddow, Mr. R. R.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamilton, Mr. K. A.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hawkings, Mr. R. J.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Heywood, Mr. Rogers.
Hirtzel, Mr. M. A. F.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Ispahani, Mr. M. A. H.
Jaialuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Saheb Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kennedy, Mr. I. G.
Mafizuddin Choudhury, Maulvi.
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Masud Ali Khan Pansi, Al-Hadj Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. G. W.
Mohammed Ali, Khan Bahader.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Muhammad Soleiman, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Nukunda Behary.
Musharruf Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Nandy, the Hon'ble Maharaja Srischandra, of Cossimbazar.
Nasarullah, Nawabzada K.
Naskar, the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy.
Roy, Mr. Pattiram.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Salim, Mr. S. A.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Sinclair, Mr. J. F.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Smith, Mr. H. Brabant.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Speller, Mr. J. H.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Walker, Mr. J. R.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M.
Whitehead, Mr. R. B.
Yousuf Mirza.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

The Ayes being 31 and the Noes 101, the motions were lost.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 for expenditure under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, we hear too much of a nation-building budget, but is it not that there is something that may be called a nation-bleeding budget? I would call the "Police" budget of this Government as a nation-bleeding budget. The Ministry is going deeper and deeper into the heart of the province to suck more and more of the nation's blood.

Talking of this budget, Sir, I am reminded of Darwin's Theory of Evolution according to which everything grows, evolves and expands. So does the demand under the head "Police" grow from

year to year and the figures swell and go on mounting up with the passing of years in an alarmingly quick speed. There is no knowing when it will reach the farthest limit.

Just look at the figures for the last four years. The police expenditure was 224 lakhs in 1938-39, 228 lakhs in 1939-40, 236 lakhs in 1940-41 and 238 lakhs in 1941-42, *i.e.*, an insignificant increase of Rs. 14 lakhs in four years!

In this connection, I may say that the standard of police expenditure in this province is far in excess of that in the other major provinces in India. Let us look at the figures for 1937-38 which are now available to us. In that year the Punjab spent 123 lakhs, Bombay spent Rs. 142 lakhs, Madras spent Rs. 164 lakhs and the Central Provinces Rs. 164 lakhs, while Bengal spent Rs. 220 lakhs. So, do Government realise what this ever-increasing expenditure under the head "Police" really means to the province? The "Police" budget in Bengal consumes more than 16 per cent. of Bengal's total revenues at the cost of nation-building activities. I remember, Sir, some time after the last Great European War of 1914-18 some great economists and thinkers of the world met at a Conference to consider some questions relating to the post-war reconstruction of the world and laid down for the guidance of the world among other things a very salutary principle, namely, that the police and the military together in any State in normal times should not consume more than 10 to 12 per cent. of the total revenues, but in Bengal the police consumes 16 per cent. That is a very sad commentary on the administration of the province. The figures I have quoted show that Bengal spent heavily, very heavily, abnormally heavily upon the police, but what is the service we get in return? Is it commensurate with the large expenditure Bengal makes on police? Are crimes on the decrease? Is Bengal having less murder, less dacoity, less riot, less offences against women or indeed less those offences that disfigure Bengal's social life? My answer to that question is an emphatic "no". I would say with all the emphasis at my command that the police have shown themselves inefficient, hopelessly inefficient in dealing with these crimes. That is my charge against the police. I charge them with inefficiency. It is a disgraceful state of affairs that while we spend heavily upon the police, crimes are increasing systematically from year to year. I therefore charge the police with inefficiency. Sir, my charge sheet against the police has been prepared by no less a person than the Inspector-General of Police himself. I would refer you, Sir, and the House to the Report of the Police Administration of the province of Bengal excluding Calcutta and Suburbs for the year 1939 by Mr. A. D. Gordon, C.I.E., Inspector-General of Police, Bengal. Last year, speaking on the "Police" budget, I am referring to the same report by the same officer for the year 1938, I said that there had

been a marked increase in some serious crimes in 1938 on the quinquennial average of the five years 1933-37, *i.e.*, five years just previous to the advent of the present Government. I take the situation in 1938 and in 1939. I will show that the situation has now become worse. Let us look at the figures drawn by Mr. Gordon himself in his report of 1939. It shows an all-round increase in serious crimes of all descriptions on the figures of 1938. The total volume of crimes rose from 44,496 in 1938 to 49,501 in 1939, *i.e.*, an increase of 5,045 cases, and these include all crimes of all descriptions. They include riot, arson, theft, burglary, robbery, offences against women and what not.

Now, Sir, let us say just a few words on offences against women which I mentioned last. These offences are increasing by leaps and bounds, and Government also admit that, as we find from the Government reply to Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri's starred question No. 92 this session. We find that these crimes are increasing. Have any steps been taken? The Hon'ble the Home Minister says that the Inspector-General of Police and the Commissioner of Police are fully alive to the serious situation of crimes, and the police are doing all that is necessary to check these offences. Sir, I am not prepared to accept the statement made by the Hon'ble the Home Minister. I can show that the police have done nothing to check these abominable crimes.

In this connection, I would refer to the Sonaimuri abduction case. It may be remembered that not very long ago a brutal outrage was committed on the wife of an Assistant Master of Sonaimuri School in the district of Noakhali. For some time the accused had absconded and the Superintendent of Police had withdrawn case against three accused. Subsequently, however, the accused persons returned, and though these people were alleged to have committed a heinous crime, nothing has been done by Government so far to place them in a court of trial. Sir, if in these circumstances anyone says that the police had a soft corner in their hearts for the accused persons, will it be very unfair? I do not know who is the gentleman occupying the position of Superintendent of Police of Noakhali. Whoever he may be, whether he bears the name of a Hindu, Muslim or Christian, he ought to have been removed from office for this one single atrocious act. With these words, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. ABUL HOSAIN AHMED : মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি পুলিশ বাজেট আলোচনা কালে একটি বিষয়ের প্রতি সকলের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিতে চাই। Police Departmentএ একটি Upper Service এবং আর একটি Lower Service আছে। Upper Serviceএর লোকদের I. P. S. বলা হয়। তারা Lower

Serviceএর লোকদের উপর অত্যাচার অবিচার করেন। এমন কি তাদের সামান্য ত্রুটি বিচ্যুতির জন্য গুরুতর শাস্তি দেওয়া হয়। পূর্ব্বকালে Inspector-General of Policeএর পদে Senior I. C. S. Officerদের মধ্য হইতে লোক নেওয়া হইত। এখন এই অবস্থাটা উঠে গিয়েছে। বুরোক্রেটিক গভর্ণমেণ্টের আমলে, প্রথম স্বদেশী আমলের যুগে হয়ত কারণ হোয়েছিল Departmental promotion দিয়ে I. G. করার। এইসব I. G.রা, অন্যান্য I. P.দের কি করে মতের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ কোর্ত্তে পারেন, যে লোকেরা কয়দিন পূর্ব্বে তাঁদের colleague ছিলেন?

তারপর আমাদের Lower Serviceএর Police officerদের, যত ইচ্ছা punishment দিলেও তার কোন প্রতিকার পাওয়া যায় না। আমার মতে Departmental promotion দিয়ে I. G. নেওয়ার প্রথা উঠিয়ে দেওয়া উচিত। পূর্ব্বে একজন Magistrate promotion পেয়ে পেয়ে Lieutenant-Governor পর্য্যন্ত হোতে পারত। সে প্রথা উঠে গিয়েছে তার কারণ এই সব Lieutenant-Governorদের Magistrateদের উপর সে রকম control থাকত না। আমি এই দিকে Chief Minister সাহেবের pointed attention draw কোরছি। Inspector-Generalএর পদে I. C. S.এর senior লোক নেওয়া হউক।

তারপর আর এক শ্রেণীর Police officer আছেন যাঁরা Upper gradeএরও নন্, Lower gradeএরও নন্—আমি D. S. P.দের কথা বোলছি। এই সব post create করা হোয়েছে যাতে Lower Serviceএর লোকেরা কখনও পুলিশ সাহেব হোতে না পারেন। "He is nothing but a বাহন"। তার ফলে এরা হয় নারদ। বাস্তবিক পক্ষে দেখতে গেলে Circle Inspectorদের হাতেই Lower Service Policeএর administration ন্যস্ত থাকে। কিন্তু, এই সব Inspectorরা তাদের subordinateদের উপর যথেষ্ট control রাখতে পারেন না। তাদের মধ্যে অনেকেই honest হোয়েছেন পুত্র শোক পেয়ে, বা স্ত্রী বিয়োগে অথবা রোগে ভুগিয়া, কিন্তু এই রকম honestyর কোন মূল্য নেই।

Sir Nazimuddinএর সঙ্গে এ নিয়ে আমি প্রায় তিন বৎসর আলোচনা কোরেছি যাতে I. G.র postএ I. C. S. থেকে লোক নেওয়া হয়। একথা শুনলে তিনি একেবারে চমকে আঁতকে উঠেন, ভয় পেয়ে যান। তবে একটা বিষয়ে তিনি আমার সঙ্গে একমত B. C. S. পরীক্ষার ভিতর দিয়ে certain percentage of Inspectors recruit কোর্ত্তে হবে।

Sir Nazimuddin বোলেছেন certain percentage; আমরা বোলেছি 50 per cent. Inspector এই ভাবে recruit করা দরকার। এইরূপ হলে আমাদের গর্দ্দভগুলো হয়ত ঠিক হোয়ে যাবে। কিছুদিন এই ভাবে চোললে তারা হয়ত honestly কাজ কোরবে। অতএব আমার মতে B. C. S. পরীক্ষার ভিতর দিয়ে Inspector recruit করা ছাড়া উপায় নেই। আর যে সব Inspectorরা উপযুক্ত হবে তাদের ভিতর থেকে S. P. নেওয়া হউক, আর D. S. P.র পদ উঠিয়ে দেওয়া হউক। তবে আমার মনে হয় আমরা সমস্ত বাঙ্গালী যেন্ন যদি একদিকে থাকি আর একজন

মাত্র European বিরুদ্ধে থাকে, Sir Nazimuddin আমাদের মত পোষণ কোরলেও তাহা কার্য্যে পরিণত কোরবেন না। অতএব আমার অনুরোধ Chief Minister সাহেব এই বিষয়টি নিজ হাতে নেবেন।

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my honourable friend Mr. Atul Chandra Sen and to oppose the main demand. The Hon'ble the Chief Minister was telling us that we should not be slow in appreciating the police. We should appreciate the good works done by the police; at the same time we should not be slow in deprecating their high-handed actions, and in supporting this motion I will only cite a few examples of acts of high-handedness and vagaries of the police in my district.

Overzealous police of Dinajpur encouraged by the then overzealous District Magistrate Rai J. P. Roy Bahadur committed many illegal and high-handed acts of barbarity on the poor and innocent villagers of my district. Their activities were such as is only possible when anarchy and chaos prevail during any political upheaval or during wide wars. Much-talked-of administration established by law and order was almost at an end for at least four days in those unhappy areas, and this state of hopeless lawlessness might have continued unchecked for many more days if on receipt of this heart-rending news I and thereafter my friend Mr. Premhari Barma had not gone to those localities.

The officer in charge of the Nawabganj police-station with his assistant sub-inspectors, constables, dafadars, chaukidars and a few villagers raided the houses and asaulted inmates both male and female of villages Chawkmohon, Beharapara, Madhyapara, Aldatpur and several others in the Nawabganj police-station. Some of the police party entered the bed-rooms in the early hours of the morning while the female inmates were yet in their beds, entered the kitchen, damaged household articles, in a few cases took away cash belonging to the villagers when the majority of the male folk being panic-stricken left their respective homes, and also made objectionable, indecent, and sarcastic remarks towards the females and used vulgar and abusive language towards them. These high-handed and atrocious activities began in the early hours of the 25th June and continued at intervals up to the 28th June. Chaukidars and dafadars were carrying spears (*vallas*) and the police carrying guns during the aforesaid raids. The officer in charge of the Parbatipur police-station and his staff also assaulted some male and female residents of village Khamar Hossainpur within his jurisdiction, but his activities were rather confined to a lesser number of persons and houses, but none-the-less high-handed and barbarous. Before giving instances and describing definite cases, it would be pertinent to mention as to why the villagers were subjected to such punishment. In 1939 there were

agrarian troubles in my district due to the prevalence of some very hard and iniquitous arrangements and methods in the matter of realisation of tolls in *hâts*, market-places and fairs and realisation of paddy and other crops from the *adhiars*. The then District Magistrate and the Subdivisional Officers in co-operation with us took care to ascertain the grievances of the cultivators and the tenants and found them to be genuine. They in their wisdom did not think of adopting suppressive and oppressive measures, but tried honestly and sincerely to give some relief to the oppressed and aggrieved peasantry with the result that the troubles subsided. There was practically no agrarian movement in the district so to speak, and conditions were returning to normal state when came, transferred from Berhampore, the valiant Rai J. P. Roy Bahadur and took charge of our district. We are informed that he has been in the cadre of District Magistrate superseding the claims of a very large number of Deputy Magistrates as a reward of oppressive and suppressive activities in the Mymensingh and the Midnapore districts. This gentleman was organising Kishan meetings, specially inviting them to attend, but I am informed he used in his speeches to vilify and abuse Kishan movements, Kishan leaders, and to hold out threats that if they did not cease to be members of Kishan Committees they would see his "*Kali Murti*" and "*Ugra Murti*," *i.e.*, his ferocious image (role) and would have to adopt his advice at the point of the bayonet. Naturally, the Kishans would not like this treatment and used to leave his meetings in a body. This would wound the vanity of this ambitious Magistrate, and he would order for arrest of some among them and issue illegal orders for release on a bail of Rs. 10,000 each. It is in consequence of such policy that the police arrested several Kishans in Nawabganj police-station. Some of them demanded to show them the warrant of arrest and the police in their arrogance did not show the warrants of arrest. The trouble arose and the police took recourse to the aforesaid high-handed activities for teaching a lesson to them for questioning their own whimsical manner of executing orders. Without naming the persons who were subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment, it will do if I cite a few of the instances. At Chakmohan one woman was under a mosquito curtain in a lying-in room. The mosquito-net was raised with a *lathi* and she was assaulted. Two other female inmates and a young man were also assaulted because they raised a hue and cry. In Aldatpur two houses were raided and from one some cash amount was taken away. The raiding party cut immoral jokes with the womenfolk and asked them to give them *pan* (betel). At Beharapara and Madhyapara they entered a large number of houses during the early hours of the morning, dragged and pushed women from out of their beds, in some cases took off their veils with the help of *lathis* and remarked lightly, "Undress yourselves, for you might have kept your male folk concealed under

your wearing cloths." At Khamar Hossainpur several persons were kept confined in the police camp, assaulted and forcibly made to give thumb impression on blank papers. One woman was assaulted with the butt-end of a gun. Dafadars and chaukidars were going round the villages and threatening men with arrest and asking them to pay some money so that they might induce officers to withhold arrest warrants against them. They were realising money in this way from overawed and panicky villagers. Some other villagers who had to do something with police, also realised money from villagers in this way. These are only a few instances of the many that occurred. I went to the locality on the 30th June, went round the places on foot, questioned a large number of them, and took notes of their statement. Before going, I wrote to the Superintendent of Police to send a responsible police officer from the town so that we may jointly investigate into the matter. He refused this offer of co-operation.

(At this stage the red light was lit.)

Sir, may I kindly be allowed two minutes more to finish my speech?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, it is very difficult to extend the time-limit because the distribution of the entire period is limited, and the time-limit cannot be extended in a particular case without curtailing the time-limit of another speech. There is always the danger that a member is not able to finish his speech within the specified time in the case of written speeches. When you require more time, it is better that you should arrange the matter with your Party Whips. In view of the fact that it is almost impossible to extend the time-limit, I hope there will not be any such request in future. However, as a special case I am allowing you, Mr. Kundu, a little more time to conclude your speech.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Thank you, Sir. I wrote successively to him giving details of the result of my investigation after I had returned and requested him to personally verify my report. I also requested the Sadar Subdivisional Officer to enquire into my reports and furnished him with the names of persons and villages, as I understood that he was going to enquire into two cases instituted against the police complaining about the unlawful and high-handed activities above referred to. It would not be out of place to mention here that the complainants and witnesses to the incident were arrested immediately after they had instituted the cases, so that they might not prove their cases, and actually one case was dismissed and one was forced to withdraw his case. It is not therefore possible for the aggrieved villagers to have any relief in the court of law also. If an independent enquiry is made, the truth may come out. I believe these officers may be appreciated by the authorities concerned

and even promoted to higher and better posts, but I must tell the House that these officers do not deserve any appreciation, for they are the enemies of the administration. They help discontentment to grow and increase and disturb normal administration by their over-zealousness, only with the selfish motive that they will be appreciated and promoted without caring that such actions on their part may spread dissatisfaction, so much so that administration may be impossible. The authorities did not stop here, but prosecuted one Sj. Sachindu Chakravarty, a young lawyer, because he helped me in the said enquiry. My name stood first in the list of accused in the police report, but I was not prosecuted. This prosecution failed and ended in acquittal on appeal. The District Judge Mr. G. B. Synge, in his illuminating judgment, acquitting him remarked, that there was no evidence to show that he organised, held or took part in any public procession for furtherance of an object which was prohibited under the Defence of India Act. He also remarked: "It is also pointed out that, although the occurrence was on the 30th of June, the sub-inspector did not ask for prosecution of anybody until the 4th of July by which time he would have known that the Subdivisional Officer had received Nishitha Babu's letter." Concluding the judgment the Judge says, "In my opinion the prosecution, having laid itself open to the suspicion that the case is a fabrication, has not proved that the accused made a speech at all."

Mr. L. T. MAGUIRE: Sir, I do not propose to join in the chorus of abuse for which sole purpose the cut seems to have been moved, nor do I consider the police inefficient. On the other hand, I have great respect for the efficiency of the Police Department working as they do under difficult conditions. To-day I want to draw the attention of Government to the traffic control in Calcutta because I feel that something could be done to improve it. In particular, I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Police Department to the absolute lack of facilities at important crossings for pedestrian traffic. Traffic control in Calcutta is confined to the control of vehicular traffic, and there is only one place at which pedestrian traffic is given facilities, and that is at the north-western corner of the Dalhousie Square and Writers' Buildings. This, I understand, was introduced as an experimental measure, but it has long passed that stage. It has proved itself to be a very effective and efficient measure, and I do not see any reason why similar facilities should not be provided for pedestrians at other important places. I believe such control is in existence in European countries, and I see no reason why it should not be put into effect over here. I believe also that it would go to the benefit of both the pedestrians and motorists because they would certainly both be more comfortable on the roads.

The other point to which I want to refer is the lack of mechanical control at very important crossings. And in this connection I may tell the House that my complaint is not that too much money is spent on the police, but I think that some more money should be spent to enable them to make improvements. It is no wonder, therefore, that to meet the increasing demand for traffic control the police that should be attending to their ordinary duties of watch and ward are now being employed to control traffic. I think it is the first duty of a Government to maintain an adequate and efficient police force, no matter whether it is expensive or not; it is the foundation on which rests all the other activities of society. Here I might say, I think it should be possible to allocate some of the proceeds of the Motor Vehicles and Petrol Taxes for the cost of additional police force to be recruited for the control of traffic in Calcutta.

There is one more point to which I would like to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister, before I sit down. It is this. There is a hand-driven cart, commonly known as a "*thalagary*". It is a positive danger on the streets of Calcutta. It is usually worked by two or three men who have absolutely no control over it. The men who actually propel these carts are blissfully ignorant of the most ordinary traffic rules. They usually belong to the coolie class who do not find other employment, and simply do it for a living. I think it is high time that Government brought in an Act to control these men, because I understand under the traffic rules as they stand to-day there is no way of bringing these people to book. They are daily labourers and the owners of the carts do not keep any register, and there is no rule by which the police can insist on registration or control over them. With these words, Sir, I suggest that the Hon'ble Minister will give these matters his serious attention.

Sir HENRY BIRKMYRE, Bart.: Mr. Speaker, Sir, one of the many charges of inefficiency levelled against the police is lack of proper traffic control in Calcutta. No one will deny that the condition of traffic is unsatisfactory or that any solution is in sight. I fear that Government must accept part responsibility for this as I consider they have not made full use of the means at their disposal.

There is a Traffic Advisory Committee which has held regular meetings since its institution in 1934. Many schemes have been formed and proposals for the improvement of traffic conditions put forward, but in spite of assurances by Government that the committee's recommendations would receive careful consideration, little or nothing has been done.

Such improvements—and they are all either minor or of an experimental nature—as have been carried out have been financed sparingly

and after great delay from Police Funds or the Public Works Department grant for the maidan.

All major schemes such as the Gyratory at the junction of Chowringhee, Corporation Street and Ochterlony Road—to mention only one, and I have no doubt there are many others even more desirable—have been shelved because Government would not provide the necessary funds.

Repeated representations have been made, not only by the Traffic Advisory Committee itself, but also by other bodies as well. I have here a copy of a letter, dated the 8th March, 1940, addressed to Government by a body whose views on the problem certainly entitle them to consideration. In spite of two reminders, one dated 15th April, 1940, and another dated 4th February, 1941, not even a formal acknowledgment has been vouchsafed by Government.

I consider, therefore, that Government should give the House an assurance that adequate funds will be provided out of the Motor Vehicles Tax to enable the committee to function efficiently. My Party cannot support the cut motion, but we would welcome a reply from the Hon'ble Minister on this point.

Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS : সভাপতি মহাশয়, আমার বলবার বেশী কিছু নেই। তবে এই Houseএ আজ পুলিশ এবং পুলিশের টাকা কমানোর যেসব suggestion হোয়েছে এ বিষয়ে আমার বিশেষ আপত্তি আছে। যে সময়ের মধ্য দিয়ে আমরা চলেছি সেই সময় পুলিশের সংখ্যা কমানোর কথা উঠিতেই পারে না। কারণ, আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি দেশের মধ্যে সকলের মনে নানা প্রকার উদ্বেগের সৃষ্টি হোয়েছে, কতকটা সাম্প্রদায়ীক অশান্তির ফলে আর কতকটা বর্ত্তমান যুদ্ধের জন্য। আমার মনে হয় এমতাবস্থায় আরো বেশী সংখ্যক পুলিশের প্রয়োজন। তবে পুলিশের efficiency সম্বন্ধে একটা question উঠেছে। Efficiencyর জন্য পুলিশ বিভাগে যে সকল বড় বড় কর্ত্তারা আছেন তাঁরা অনেক পরিমাণে এরজন্য দায়ী। তাঁদের এ বিষয়ে সতর্ক হওয়া উচিত। তা না হলে বাইরে থেকে খালি efficiency, efficiency বলে চিৎকার কোরলে কিছু হবে না। এই সম্পর্কে আমাদের Scheduled Casteএর তরফ থেকে আমি কিছু বোলতে চাই। পুলিশের Intelligence Branch বা Special Branchএ Scheduled Casteএর লোক খুব কমই আছে। আমি এদিকে Governmentএর বিশেষ দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কোরছি। পুলিশের এই দুইটি Branchএ Scheduled Casteএর যথেষ্ট সংখ্যক লোক না থাকায় তাহাদের স্বার্থের অনেক সময় হানি হয়। Scheduled Casteএর মা, বাপ কেউ নেই, জগতের মধ্যে এমনি অবস্থায় তারা সৃষ্টি হোয়েছে যে তারা যেন সকলের অনুগ্রহ পেতেই আছে। যদি পুলিশের এই Special Branch এবং Intelligence Branchএ আমাদের লোক না থাকে এবং আমাদের লোকের বিরুদ্ধে অন্য সম্প্রদায়ের লোক নানা রকম report করে বলে তাহলে হয়ত আমরা Governmentএর বিষ নজরে পড়ে

থাকবে। এই কারণে আমাদের স্বার্থ রক্ষা করবার জন্য এবং দেশ সেবা করবার জন্য সেখানে আমাদের লোক থাকা দরকার। দেশ সেবার যে সুযোগ এই Departmentএ হয়, আমাদের লোক সেই সুযোগ কেন পাবে না। এদিকে আমাদের সম্প্রদায়ের লোক না থাকার জন্য আমাদের যে অনেক অসুবিধা হচ্ছে একথা পূর্ব্বে বহুবার গভর্ণমেণ্টকে জানান হোয়েছে এবং পুনরায় আমি গভর্ণমেণ্টের দৃষ্টি এদিকে আকর্ষণ কোরছি। বর্ত্তমানে গভর্ণমেণ্টের চাকুরীতে Scheduled Casteএর তরফ থেকে কিছু কিছু লোক নেবার ব্যবস্থা হোয়েছে এবং যাঁরা এই ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন আমি তাঁদের ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি। আমি আশা করি Scheduled Casteএর সংখ্যা অনুসারে যে পরিমাণ পাওয়া উচিত তাঁরা সেই অনুপাতে লোক নিয়োগের ব্যবস্থা কোরবেন। যেহেতু Scheduled Casteএর কোন উচচ কর্ম্মচারী পুলিশ Departmentএ নেই, যেহেতু controlling authoritiesদের মধ্যে আমাদের লোক নেই সেইহেতু যাতে আমাদের case by default হোয়ে না যায়, এই দিকে Governmentএর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কোরছি।

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Mr. Speaker, Sir, various points have been raised and various matters discussed in the course of this debate, but there is one matter about which I feel that I owe it to the House to make a brief statement. I refer to the class of offiences which we all loathe and abhor—I mean the offences against women, which have unfortunately shown a slight tendency to increase during the last few years. In 1938, the number of such offences reported to the police was 1,087; in 1939 it was 1,141; and up to November, 1940, the number has been 1,199.

Now, Sir, these offences are very difficult to deal with for various reasons. In the first place, there is a natural reluctance of the members of the family where these victims reside to expose to the public their sorrows and their shame and the reluctance also of the people to give evidence or bring the matter to a court of law. Secondly, Sir, there is hardly any criteria by which it could be decided in what way we can ascribe the sudden increase of crimes of this description. The House may rest assured that Government deprecate the situation that has arisen and they yield to none in their hatred and loathing of the contemptible creatures who are guilty of such abominable crimes. In normal times the difficulties of controlling such offences are very great and the difficulties have increased in abnormal times such as at the present moment when owing to various calls the police find it difficult to keep constant watch over the suspected criminals. Sir, so long as even one offence is reported against women, we as Government will not remain satisfied with the situation. I ask for the confidence and the co-operation of the whole House in dealing with these offences and in helping Government to try and bring about a situation in which such offences would be impossible. Sir, much has got to be done by the leaders of public opinion, and I am sure there is not a member of any

community who for one moment would not only not encourage but would be reluctant to discourage offences of this description. It has been found that sometimes these offences take place and sometimes normal conditions are restored, but every time that these offences are reported to the police, vigorous steps are taken to bring the offenders to book, and it is seldom that cases of this character fail on account of the lack of activities of the police.

As regards the general remarks that have been made, I have nothing to say. I only ask for the indulgence of the House to consider the difficult set of conditions under which the police in the country perform their duties. I also ask the House to realise that Government have got no particular liking to saddle the exchequer with a class of public officers who would be considered unnecessary and even incompetent, but that they are siding with those who hold the view that police should be supported solely because without police it is impossible to maintain law and order. We have got to realise the fundamental requisites of our advance. In whatever direction we may want an advance to be made, it depends on the maintenance of law and order and the existence of peace and tranquillity in the province. In the first instance, the duty of maintaining law and order and peace and tranquillity must rest with the police, either urban or rural, and it is not by trying to find fault so much as by encouraging the people who have got to perform these duties that we will be able to attain something like perfection in this state of things, and we will be able also to see that conditions are brought about in which offences either against persons or property become impossible. There is a natural tendency to look upon everything relating to the "Police" budget with suspicion. The whole budget is before the House and even to those who hold that the expenses are on the high side, I would submit that there are various considerations which have led the Government to put forward this demand before the House. We know very well that we have got to justify expenditure of even a single pie, I mean the increased expenditure in relation to the police, and it is not a very pleasant thing to us to present a budget which is more expensive than what it was in previous years. But we are forced by circumstances to ask for more money because more work is required of the police, and it is from that point of view that I ask the House to take a more indulgent view of the situation and to believe Government when they say that this money is absolutely required and required for no other purpose than for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity and law and order in the province.

Sir, before I sit down I wish to say a few words about some remarks that have been made by Mr. Abul Hossain Ahmed. His suggestion about direct recruitment of inspectors deserves very serious consideration, and we will consider how far a suggestion like that can be implemented in actual practice.

The motion of Mr. Atul Chandra Sen that the demand of Rs. 2,20,53,000 under the head "29—Police" be reduced by Rs. 100, was then put and lost.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is one motion in the name of Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy about the arrest of Muslims during the Muharrum. May I know if that matter is still under judicial investigation?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: Yes, it is still under police enquiry.

Mr. SPEAKER: So long as the matter is under judicial investigation, I am afraid, it cannot be moved.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, we are told that all the arrested men have been released and there is no person who is under arrest now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Still as the matter has gone to Court, it cannot be moved.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: You remember, Sir, that there was an adjournment motion which was given notice of from this side and which is still pending in your file.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am helpless.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq that a sum of Rs. 2,20,53,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "29—Police" was then put and agreed to.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the members have noticed the change in the programme for to-morrow. Instead of "Medical and Public Health," we will take up "Irrigation and Civil Works."

Adjournment.

It being 8-10 p.m.—

The House was adjourned till 4-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 20th of March, 1941, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Thursday, the 20th March, 1941, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Sir Muhammad Azizul Haque, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 180 members.

Dacca riot.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Sir, before you take up the questions may we know from the Government about the present communal situation at Dacca?

Mr. SPEAKER: In the absence of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister, who has proceeded to Dacca in this connection this morning by a 'plane, I can tell you that as far as I am aware the situation is somewhat better. But I cannot take any responsibility for this statement.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: May we know from the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy about the latest developments?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, the situation is much better and is now under control.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Government orders to District Magistrates regarding holding of meetings by the Public.

(When question No. *176 was called out Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy rose to a point of order before the printed answer was read out.)

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: On a point of order, Sir. With regard to the answer given to my Starred Question No. 176, I want to know whether the reply is in order or not. We have asked

whether meetings which seek to discuss the Jute Regulation Act of 1940 or other enactments of this Province have been banned, and you, Sir, will find the answer in the printed reply. It is for you to decide, Sir, whether the answer is in order or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: How can I know that unless I have the whole file about it before me? You can ascertain that by putting supplementary questions.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Sir, the point is whether the answer is at all relevant. We ask you, Sir, to decide that point.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have not read the answer yet. Let me first hear the Hon'ble Minister's reply.

***176. Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY, Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR and Mr. MD. ABUL FAZL:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that instructions have been issued by Government to the District Magistrates asking them to ban all meetings which seek to discuss the Jute Regulation Act, 1940, or other enactments of this Province?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN (on behalf of the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): (*a*) Such instructions have been issued in respect of protests against the enforcement of jute restriction as already decided upon and ordered under the Bengal Jute Regulation Act, 1940.

(*b*) Such protests would inevitably have led to incitement to break the law and might have resulted in such breaches on a wide scale. They would have been attended with imminent danger of a breach of the peace. The inevitable consequences of a contravention of the provisions of the Jute Regulation Act, would be economic distress of a gravity which cannot be estimated and Government would have been compelled, in order to enforce the law, to make demands upon their security services which would almost certainly have involved the utmost danger to the public order and safety. Government did not consider that they could run these risks consistently with their responsibility for the maintenance of law and order and of the economic condition of the cultivators.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: On a point of order, Sir. So far as our question is concerned, there is no mention of protests. How can therefore the Hon'ble Minister assume that we sought permission to record our protests in those meetings? We simply wanted

to discuss the Jute Regulation Act and any other enactment passed by this Legislature. I cannot understand why the Hon'ble Minister has based his reply on the assumption that we were going to hold protest meetings. We want your ruling, Sir, as to whether this is a proper answer or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: I feel that the matter has been somewhat confusing. You have asked whether instructions have been issued to the District Magistrates to ban all meetings which seek to discuss the Jute Regulation Act. The reply is that instructions have been issued but not for the purpose of what you have sought to ascertain but for the purpose of banning protests against jute restriction. As a matter of fact these instructions are to ban all meetings which are in the nature of protests against the enforcement of jute restriction.

Mr. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: But instructions are not a part of the Jute Regulation Act. We have yet to learn that instructions form part of an Act. But our request to you, Sir, is to decide whether the answer given is in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can obtain that information by means of supplementary questions. It may be that the answer is incomplete, but it is up to you to clear up the position by putting supplementary questions. I am sorry, I cannot interfere in the matter.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: I submit, Sir, that when notices of questions are given, if questions are not directly answered or are answered evasively asking for notice if a supplementary question is put, the matter may for the time being be disposed of. We may again give a fresh notice but Government will again perhaps adopt the same attitude. Therefore, I think, it is useless to send in such notices.

Mr. SPEAKER: I understand your point. Your point is, I think, whether apart from the question of jute restriction people have got the right to discuss the Regulation Act itself.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: The allegation contained in the question is whether meetings convened for the purpose of discussing the Jute Regulation Act have been banned, and we want a definite answer to that question.

Mr. SPEAKER: You can ask that question straight on.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: The question is whether it is a fact that instructions have been issued by the Government to the District Magistrates asking them to ban all meetings which seek to discuss the Jute Regulation Act. It is so very clear, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The proper reply should have been "No, it has not been done". But that information you can elicit by a supplementary question.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I want that answer from the Hon'ble Minister.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, the Government orders were not issued exactly in the terms as stated in the question, Government have not issued instructions to ban such meetings.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister kindly place on the table a copy of the Government order that has been issued?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, the orders are confidential. I can only give the substance of the order but I cannot place it on the table.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to give a categorical denial to this part of the question, namely, whether the order affects discussion of any Acts of this Legislature?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I have already said that.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: What have you said?

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: You have said nothing.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Yes, I have said something——

(At this stage there was much interruption in the House.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. If honourable members make such interruptions, I shall have to pass on to the next question.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: May we ask the Hon'ble Minister through you, Sir, to give an answer to the question put by Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri?

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Hon'ble Minister should reply to that question.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, will my friend repeat his question?

Mr. SPEAKER: His question was whether apart from the question of enforcement of jute restriction, is any other enactment or other part of the Jute Regulation Act banned?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Any discussion or protest?

Mr. SPEAKER: Discussion or even protest against any Act.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, first of all, the order did not cover discussion merely and, secondly, it did not cover any other Act.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how Government propose to distinguish between discussion and protest? He says that the order does not cover discussion but only protest. Therefore my supplementary question is how does Government distinguish between discussion and protest.

Mr. SPEAKER: Discussion of any other issue.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how it is expected that people will lodge their protest against the enforcement of jute restriction—in what form?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That is exactly what Government intended to prohibit on the eve of and during the sowing season.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government order excludes the possibility of protesting against the Jute Regulation Act without in actual practice violating the principles of the Act?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Sir, I could not follow the question.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: To make the question clear, I ask the Hon'ble Minister: the Jute Regulation Act might be disapproved and one might protest against it without actually——

Mr. SPEAKER: Your question is: apart from jute restriction, can other protests——

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: No, no, Sir. My question is: I protest against the Jute Regulation Act but in doing so I do not violate the provisions of the Act. I am not violating the law which relates to restriction, but I simply disapprove of the ordinance or the present Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: He has made it clear that they wanted that part of the Act to be discussed.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether people are allowed to protest against and voice their disapproval of the Jute Regulation Act without however infringing the provisions of restriction in which case they are in the clutches of the law?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I think, Sir, hardly any distinction can be made between the two things in actual practice and therefore Government does not intend to allow my friend the rope that he wants.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether jute cultivators are allowed to have freedom of their opinion in voicing their entire disapproval of the Act?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has made that clear, namely, that they are not permitted.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether with a view to create public opinion so as to amend the Jute Regulation Act, meetings are allowed to criticise the Jute Regulation Act, 1940?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I may state that in certain area a gentleman whose name is known to everyone in this House had been creating mischief by inciting the cultivators to break the Jute Regulation Act and not to abide by the directions of Government. In view of that Government thought it fit to take precautions so that things like this might not recur.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: No, Sir, my question was whether meetings are permitted to criticise the Jute Regulation Act with a view to impress upon the Government to amend the Jute Regulation Act?

Mr. SPEAKER: He has definitely said "no".

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state with reference to his answer just now given, that a certain gentleman known to him was inciting violation of the Jute Regulation Act, whether any proceedings have been taken against that person and whether he has been prosecuted for inciting breach of the law?

Mr. SPEAKER: Instead of prosecution they have done that.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The question of prosecution is still under consideration.

Communal representation on the staff of official reporters in both the Houses of Legislature.

***177. Mr. MIA ABDUL HAFIZ:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) the total strength of official reporters in both the Houses of Legislature;

(*ii*) the number of them that are (1) Hindus and (2) Muslims?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the rule of communal proportion is maintained in making recruitment to this cadre of service?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy): The attention of the honourable member is invited to the reply given by me on the 11th March, 1941, to starred question No. 141 asked by Maulvi Abdul Wahab Khan.

Condition of health of Dr. Bhupal Chandra Bose.

***178. Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state the present condition of health of Dr. Bhupal Chandra Bose, B.SC., M.B., now detained under the Defence of India Rules?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The security prisoner referred to, complains of weakness of both the lower limbs and rectal stasis for which he is being treated. Otherwise his health is good.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state for how long has this prisoner been suffering from these complaints?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Since February last.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: What arrangements have been made by Government for his treatment?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: He was properly examined in the Calcutta Medical College and he is under proper medical treatment.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: May I know what is his present condition?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: His present condition is, as I have stated, good; it is not otherwise.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state who is the doctor under whose treatment he is kept at the present moment?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: He was examined in the electro-therapy department of the Medical College, and he is following the treatment prescribed by the doctor.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: My question has not been answered. I am asking who is the doctor under whose treatment he is placed at the present moment. His examination took place in February, but who is the doctor who is looking after him.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I ask for notice.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answer was laid on the table)

Qualifications prescribed for the posts of Head Maulvis and Assistant Maulvis of Government and Government-aided schools.

66. Maulvi SAYED AHMED KHAN: Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to state what are standard qualifications prescribed for appointment to the posts of Head Maulvi and Second Maulvi of the Government and Government-aided high schools in Bengal?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): The member is referred to the replies given to his unstarred question No. 10 on the 28th November, 1940, on the floor of this House.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

XVII, etc.—Irrigation and 50—Civil Works and 81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue.

The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 32,13,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation—Working Expenses, 18.—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Ordinary Revenues, 18(1).—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Famine Relief Fund, 19.—Construction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works, financed from Ordinary Revenues and 68.—Construction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works not charged to revenues". With the amount provided on account of charged expenditure the total budget under these heads is Rs. 35,13,000 as against the current year's budget grant of Rs. 35,34,000.

Sir, in moving this demand for expenditure, I would not take much time of the House for going into the details of the provisions under each head. These details have been explained in the explanatory memorandum on the budget, now in the hands of the honourable members. I should, however, like to dwell briefly on some of the important provisions as regards new works and works in progress, and the programme that we have followed and propose to follow in future.

A list of new works and works in progress provided for in the next year's budget will be found on pages 27-32 of the Irrigation budget.

Among the new works, I think, the following are worth mentioning:—

(*i*) Improvement of the Bemorta Khal in Khulna district

Owing to the deterioration of this *khal*, traffic had to be diverted to a roundabout route causing considerable inconvenience to the public. There has also been considerable drainage congestion and waterlogging in the extensive *bils* and low-lying areas.

The improvement of this *khal* is, therefore, urgently needed. A number of questions in this House was also put urging me to take up this work.

(*ii*) Excavation of a chord cut from the old Kumar river to the Upper Kumar river for the improvement of the Lower Kumar river in the Faridpore district.

The Lower Kumar river in Faridpore district has greatly deteriorated owing mainly to the inflow of a large volume of silt-laden flood water from the Arial Khal through the Upper Kumar which has been cut through by this river at Nilokhi. The deterioration, it is reported, has reached such an acute stage that even during the last flood season the despatch services could not use this route and the deterioration is also spreading to the Bil route. A chord cut has, therefore, been found to be necessary in the interest of navigation in the Madaripore Bil route and the Lower Kumar river.

(*iii*) Improvement of the Dhurang Khal in Chittagong district

There is a keen demand for irrigation along the old course of the Dhurang Khal in Chittagong district and I also felt it during my visit to the area.

(*iv*) The Bidyadhari-Peali scheme in the 24-Parganas district.

This is expected to effect improvement in drainage in the area south and south-east of Calcutta which suffers from annual flooding during the rains. I had occasions to explain this scheme during the a discussion of the Adiganga Improvement Bill quite recently.

(*v*) The Ghuni-Jatragatchi scheme in the 24-Parganas district.

The scheme aims at relieving the drainage congestion of the *bil* areas north of the Kristopur canal caused by the rapid deterioration of the Bidyadhari river and its tributaries.

(*vi*) Improvement of the Karnapara Khal in Dacca district.

This will improve navigation and relieve drainage congestion and also increase the supply of fresh water into the Buri Ganga river near Dacca. The urgency of this scheme was brought to my notice by the

District Board of Dacca and I think this will have a far-reaching effect on the improvement of public health of this city and the neighbouring areas.

(*vii*) Improvement of the Marjora Khal in Tippera district.

This will ease flood situation of the area affected by the breaches in the right bank of the Gumti river. It is also expected to afford better navigation facilities.

(*viii*) Improvement of the Thanda Bibi's Khal in the Bakarganj district.

(*ix*) Diversion of the Noakhali Khal for protection of the Noakhali town.

The re-excavation of the Thanda Bibi's Khal in the Bakarganj district for improvement of public health and communication, and the diversion of the Noakhali Khal for protection of the Noakhali town from erosion were found emergent. Many petitions and telegrams were received from the public demanding immediate execution of the works. I have, therefore, issued necessary orders for starting the works in the present financial year.

(*x*) Establishment of a River Institute in Bengal.

I shall speak about this in detail later on.

3. As regards *works in progress*, I may mention, Sir, that a provision of Rs. 1,72,000 was made in the current year's budget for 5 major schemes estimated to cost about Rs. 7,87,000 in all. These schemes are—(1) the Tolly's Nulla Scheme in the 24-Parganas district, (2) the Bhedra Bil Drainage Scheme in the Natore subdivision of the Rajshahi district, (3) the scheme for reclaiming the Madhumati river in the Khulna district (Chitalmari scheme), (4) the Aurora Khal scheme in the Arambagh subdivision of the Hooghly district and (5) the Contour Survey of North Bengal. All these schemes have already been taken up this year, and a further provision for these works and for a few other works taken up during the previous years and not completed, have been made in the next year's budget.

4. Sir, the total provision for works in the next year's budget is Rs. 5,81,000. In addition to this sum, there is a provision of Rs. 50,000, for grant-in-aid to the District Boards for execution of comparatively small projects of local importance under the decentralisation scheme. In my last budget speech, I explained to this House the genesis and the general outlines of this scheme, which contemplates initiation, preparation and execution of small projects of local importance by the District Boards with a grant-in-aid from the Government. Local bodies like the District Boards are the best judges of the importance and urgency of the need of a locality, and when the initiative is

left with them as under the present scheme, it is expected that the work will be more expeditious and economical. The sum of Rs. 50,000 provided in the current year's budget under this head has been fully allotted for the execution of 15 schemes in the various districts. On behalf of the Government I thank those district boards who have taken a keen interest in the execution of these local projects and in thus improving the public health of the rural areas under their control. I trust that other District Boards will also co-operate with the Government in making this scheme a success and send in proposals early for the next year so that they may be examined and money sanctioned in good time.

5. Sir, there is another item worth mentioning at this stage, viz., Government of India's grant on minor drainage and flushing schemes and improvement of village communications. The House will be interested to know that so far about 281 schemes of village communications, including waterways, and 28 minor drainage and flushing schemes have been taken up from these grants and mostly completed in the different districts of Bengal.

6. I have just now referred to the budget provision that has been made by me in respect of the establishment of a River Research Institute in Bengal. I should ask the honourable members to view this proposal on its proper background of the comprehensive policy towards Bengal's rivers, outlined by me to this House three years ago. For the convenience of my friends, may I recapitulate the main points of this policy and explain the budget provisions intended to implement the same?

Firstly, since I assumed charge, steps were taken to invite the opinion of the members of the Legislature as also the public bodies on the basis of a questionnaire about the policy to be adopted towards Bengal's rivers. Armed with this opinion, I arranged a conference of technical experts and scientists in July, 1938, which arrived at certain conclusions. We then framed the main lines on which the Government should tackle the intricate problem of the control and regulation of the behaviour of the Bengal rivers, having due regard to the regional and special needs of Western, Central, North and Eastern Bengal.

7. Secondly, Sir, I took up the necessary reorganisation of the department which was greatly understaffed, as without the machinery it would not be possible to implement the forward policy outlined by the new Government. Thanks to the approval of this House for my proposal in this regard, it has been possible for me to reorganise and expand the department to a certain extent on a permanent basis. Though it has not been possible yet to recruit the staff to the full strength of the expanded cadre for various reasons, I have nevertheless

been able to make considerable progress. The department had two circles of superintendence, 8 divisions and 22 subdivisions when I took charge of it: the present permanent organisation consists of 3 circles 11 divisions and 29 subdivisions. I now feel that in comparison with the past, the department has been converted into a more efficient machinery, better suited to initiate and prepare major schemes of development in tune with the new policy.

8. Thirdly, Sir. there is this proposal to establish a River Research Institute in Bengal for which I have made a provision of Rs. 20,000 in the budget. At this institute the department will be able to test the soundness of their proposals by means of models before asking the tax-payer to commit himself to heavy expenditure. In other words this is an essential measure to ensure efficiency of working of the bigger schemes of river control and development, and what is more important, ensure success and effect economy in the ultimate cost. Honourable members are aware that this scheme was also strongly recommended by the conference of scientists and experts just referred by me, and was prepared with the assistance of an expert whose services were kindly placed at our disposal by the Government of the Punjab. The idea is to reproduce the river, the condition of its flow and the proposal for its improvement in small scale models, which can be done at a very small cost at the laboratory, and by studying its behaviour, to judge as to the suitability of the proposal and by trial and error to find out the most suitable and economical solution. This institute will be established as an experimental measure for five years in the first instance. The estimated cost of the scheme amounts to Rs. 5,96,000 consisting of Rs. 1,06,000 initial non-recurring charge, and Rs. 98,000 recurring charge annually for a period of 5 years. If at the end of this period Government are satisfied as to the result, the question of retention of the institute for a further specific period or permanently will be considered.

9. Fourthly, Sir, from the very beginning we have felt that if the river problems of Bengal are to be successfully tackled the inter-provincial aspects of them should be fully considered and attempts be made accordingly. In my last Budget Speech I also touched this problem in some detail. I do not propose to cover the ground once again, but I would like to inform the House as to the progress that it has been possible to make since then. As I told the House, the Bengal Government in co-operation with the other Provincial Governments concerned set up two Interim Committees, one for the Ganges and the other for the Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers, to frame the necessary constitution and function of the proposed Inter-Provincial River Commissions. These Interim Committees have since finished their labours and submitted their reports.

10. With regard to the proposed Brahmaputra-Meghna Rivers Commission, I am glad to inform the House that considerable progress has been made, as both the Bengal and Assam Governments have accepted the recommendations of the Interim Committee, and we have moreover been authorised by the Assam Government to address the Government of India on the subject with a request to constitute the Commission on the lines of these recommendations. I may mention in this connection that with a view to persuade the Government of India to take some interest in the matter and expedite the constitution of these Commissions I went to Delhi last November and discussed the matter with the Hon'ble Member in charge. I am glad to be able to inform the House that the Hon'ble Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar took a very sympathetic view and assured me that the Government of India would be prepared to constitute the Commission after the details were discussed at a conference of representatives of all the Provinces and States concerned, which they propose to convene soon after receipt of our official representation on the subject.

As all the preliminaries have now been settled and the Assam Government have since authorised us to address the Government of India on their behalf, I shall take the necessary step accordingly with the least possible delay. It is, therefore, expected that the constitution of the Brahmaputra-Meghna Rivers Commission may be a settled fact in the course of the coming year.

The progress with regard to the constitution of the proposed Ganges River Commission has not, however, been quite so satisfactory. The Interim Committee has recently submitted its report which is now under my consideration. It is, however, expected that after the Brahmaputra-Meghna Rivers Commission has been constituted by the Government of India, the constitution of the Ganges River Commission, more or less on similar lines, will be comparatively easier.

Sir, I think I need not explain in detail why so much importance is attached to the constitution of these two Inter-Provincial River Commissions. The success of many of the measures which we propose to adopt to solve our river problems is dependent to a great extent on the manner in which the inter-provincial aspects of these problems are tackled. There is, for example, the flood problem; even that aspect of it which falls strictly in the provincial sphere such as the improvement of the spill channels, provision of spill areas, etc., is not likely to be successful in the long run unless simultaneous steps are taken through the agency of these Inter-Provincial River Commissions to stop the mischief at the source. In Bengal floods are getting higher and higher, and there has been more and more silt choking the river channels and making them less and less efficient to carry the same, thanks to the rate of run-off and soil denudation which are gradually on the increase in the up-river areas and the extensive and often indiscriminate

disafforestation in the catchment basins. As honourable members are aware, the consequences of this unfortunate development are disastrous, in so far as the countryside of Bengal is concerned. There is then another serious menace confronting us in Bengal, due to the decrease in the sub-soil storage in the catchment basin of our rivers. It is this sub-soil storage which, by percolation throughout the year, maintains the flow in the rivers during the dry season when no rainfall can be expected and which is so vitally necessary to serve our needs for navigation, domestic supply and to maintain the innumerable tidal channels and to push down the salt water brought in by the flow tides.

Fifthly, as another side to the implementing of a comprehensive river policy we took up the contour surveys of the decadent areas of Bengal, as these were considered to be essential preliminaries for the major schemes of irrigation and flood flushing. I am glad to inform the House that the survey of Western and Central Bengal have been completed, and that of North Bengal has been taken up this year and is likely to be completed in the near future. As a result of these surveys, Sir, it has been possible to prepare a network of irrigation and flood-flushing schemes. In Western Bengal, there is the Damodar-Hooghly-Howrah Flushing scheme which was placed before this House in the last August Session and its approval taken for the execution of the same under the Bengal Development Act. It is the intention of the Government to push on the scheme by means of a loan, as soon as financial circumstances permit and the prices come down to their normal level. In Central Bengal we have made an approximate estimate for a comprehensive flushing scheme for the area lying between the Bhagirathi and Jalangi rivers. There is yet another scheme for the area lying to the east of Jalangi, which is under preparation. A map showing the details of these schemes and the areas likely to be improved by the same has been placed on the Library table in order to enable honourable members to visualise the position at a glance.

Sir, we have also just completed the preparation of approximate estimate of costs of the Darakeswar Reservoir project, which has been under investigation recently. Owing to the acute distress now prevailing in Birbhum district, I paid a visit to Suri recently and took the opportunity fo inspect the site of the Messanjore Dam which is the main feature of the More Reservoir project. I was very much impressed by its natural advantages. I trust the House will agree with me that early execution of this project, which will irrigate about 4,61,000 acres in Birbhum, Burdwan and Murshidabad districts, will provide the most effective insurance against famine which periodically visits these parts.

Sir, I trust I have been able to convince the House that we have followed up the outlines of the comprehensive and forward river policy energetically and against tremendous odds. As I explained on previous

occasions, one of the unfortunate legacies of the past has been that Bengal was never irrigation-minded, at least not so seriously as the sister provinces like the Punjab, Madras or the United Provinces. While therefore the problems multiplied and got more aggravated as years rolled on, the need for widening the angle of approach and for shouldering a heavier financial commitment also increased correspondingly. During the three years of my stewardship, I think I have been able to introduce a reorientation of outlook, remodel and expand the machinery to take up its duties efficiently, collect the necessary data for intensive planning, and in spite of great financial handicaps introduce a good number of irrigation schemes not only as satisfying pressing local needs, but also as essential links in the chain of a comprehensive policy towards Bengal's rivers. Our progress has been slow no doubt, but we have been able to take definite and surer strides towards that glorious end—the resuscitation of the dying rivers of Bengal and the putting of new life into the moribund countryside.

With these words, Sir, I invite criticisms from my honourable friends opposite.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would ask you also to move the next demand for Civil Works.

The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: On the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 1,55,71,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue."

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: May I just enquire, Sir, for our individual convenience whether you are going to follow the list of business, item by item?

Mr. SPEAKER: What I propose to do is that so far as the gentlemen who have given notices of cut motions are concerned, when they move their cut motions they can speak on the motions themselves but other members who want to speak can speak generally on both the demands together or separately. Apparently "Irrigation" is likely to take much more time, and it is in order to give better facilities to members to speak on either of the subjects or on both that I have proposed a joint debate on both the demands.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Will it not be convenient to oppose the main motion of the Hon'ble Minister at this stage before any cut motion is moved?

Mr. SPEAKER: Because you have no cut motion to move? (Laughter.)

Mr. MD. ABUL FAZL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand for Rs. 32,13,000 under heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100. Sir, the purpose of my motion is to raise a discussion about failure of Government to adopt any irrigation scheme for the purpose of improving sanitation and fertility of the soil of Bengal. It is well known that many parts of Bengal are constantly in the grip of malaria and other fell diseases and Government have to increase grants for quinine and anti-malaria schemes. Chief causes of these diseases are to be looked for in the stagnant pools of dead rivers and in the decadent condition of many rivers, *khals* and *beels*. The result of the gradual deterioration of these rivers, *khals* and *beels* have been that the countryside in most parts of Bengal now look desolate with pestilential areas where disease, death and pestilence reign supreme, and productivity of the soil is greatly diminished.

Irrigation is closely connected with agriculture. The agricultural population of Bengal are mostly in a famished condition. The world famous granaries of Bengal have been turned into unproductive waste lands and swampy tracts where germs of various diseases find easy means of germination. The Bengal Ministry is responsible for this state of affairs. The trouble is that Government do not know where to begin and how to spend the money. Government had provided last year a sum of Rs. 50,000 for Bidhyadhari-Peali scheme which will ultimately cost Rs. 3 lakhs and has provided Rs. 20,000 for improvement of the Karnapara Khal, which will ultimately cost Rs. 1,82,000; and Rs. 20,000 has been provided for establishment of an institute for river research in Bengal which, as the Hon'ble the Finance Minister has said in his Budget Statement, will cost Rs. 6 lakhs in the next five years. These are some of the big schemes that Government intend to undertake for tackling the river problem of Bengal and which they hope will improve sanitation and bring back plenty to the people.

These expenditures would be thoughtless to say the least. If instead of these projects, the Minister in charge had undertaken small irrigation projects drawn up in consultation with the technical experts of Government much could have been hoped to be done. During the course of the last four years the Government can be charged with criminal neglect of minor schemes of drainage, public health, productivity of the soil, re-excavation, etc., which are for the benefit of the country and they have hitherto followed the policy of patronising those whose support they want for continuance of their power and position.

In his budget speech last year, the Hon'ble Minister in charge gave us an idea of the number of small schemes, district by district, which could be taken up in due course. A small number of these projects

were taken up and completed. But Government have shown utter lack of system in taking up the more important works amongst them.

In my own subdivision of Madaripur two very important projects have not been taken up by Government in spite of insistent demands by the people.

One is near the Beel route from Sindiaghat to Charmaguria. Re-excavation of a few miles of dried up and dying bed of the river Kumar would have made a very large tract of Madaripur and Gopalganj subdivisions easy of communication and navigation, and the locality around would have been healthy and productivity of the soil greatly increased. Some 10 years ago Government spent 7 or 8 lakhs of rupees for constructing lock and sluice gates by the sides of this dead river which are now a huge waste of public money.

Then again a three-mile re-excavation of the Palong-Sureswar Nulla would have similarly saved a very large eastern part of Madaripur subdivision from great deterioration in health and wealth. Large business centres by the sides of this *nulla* are going to ruins for want of this re-excavation. The contour survey of North Bengal is still going on and a further sum of Rs. 35,000 has been budgeted for expenditure next year, but in spite of the promise of the Minister in charge to take up small irrigation projects last year, very little has been done.

It is also well known that Government have done nothing to counteract the annual floods which devastate large parts of East and North Bengal and damage and destroy crops. Fortunately, there was very little flood last year, but Government should be alert and take preventive measures beforehand. Government have failed to take steps to avert the annual breaches in the embankment in the river Gumti (Tippera) and have not yet taken any steps to resuscitate the dying river Teetash in the same district. In Mymensingh some years ago a special provision of Rs. 24,000 was made for improving the Brahmapuara, but nothing as yet has been done in that respect.

Before I finish, Sir, I must refer to the "huge" waste of public money in this department through contractors of original and repair works. Most of these contractors are in league with the officers of the department in plundering public money by rendering insufficient work and by use of worthless materials. These works when finished are easily approved of by higher officers because they get a good share of the spoils.

I must also refer to the callousness of Government in finding out the corruption of toll-collecting agencies of this department from a very long time passed. Lower officers of the toll department vie with each other in getting transferred to lucrative stations, where the agencies from top to bottom plunder public money in the most reckless way.

These toll-collecting agencies get hold of nearly every dealer of fish, fruit and vegetables with his boat, and receive large presents of these articles or money for lower tolls. These articles in their turn find their way not only to every agent of the toll office but to the house of higher officers who are thus silenced from taking any steps when some bold dealer happens to complain of this treatment. The out income of the toll office people from other boatmen, also considerable in amount, is however generally shared by the people of the Irrigation toll offices according to their respective ranks. Attention of the higher officers of the department has from time to time been drawn to these offences but hitherto not a single culprit has been punished though this has been going on for more than the last 25 years.

Is this not really shameful for a popular Government? This has the double effect of degrading the morality of the dealers and of the people who come in contact with this department and of loss of a great part of public revenue in the shape of toll receipts, all of which are appropriated by many of the officers employed by the Irrigation Department of Government. If the Hon'ble Minister had sense enough to save this enormous waste, many schemes of immediate importance could be taken in hand.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I rise to speak on irrigation it reminds me of the remarks of the colleague of the Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation, I mean, the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy, who said—"The manner in which another great department which could have been of untold benefit to the people has been starved—I refer to the Irrigation Department—is nothing short of a scandal." Sir, the best compliment that the Hon'ble Minister has received he has received from his own colleague, the Hon'ble the Finance Minister.

The Hon'ble the Minister in charge of the Irrigation Department having nothing to his credit has taken a consolation prize by narrating that he has sanctioned Rs. 20,000 for the establishment of an institute for river research in Bengal. After four long years' conception the Hon'ble Minister has conceived the idea of a research institution. Many thanks for this trouble and perhaps now he may have his well earned rest.

Nowhere in the world, irrigation has been so much neglected as it has been in Bengal. The Hon'ble Minister may have consolation by

setting up a research institute or by putting a few enquiry committees, but thereby he will not be able to hoodwink the people of Bengal.

Let me quote a few lines from the Report of the Irrigation Committee of the year 1930. The Report says—"Work on irrigation, embankments and drainage has been almost confined to the Burdwan Division and the environments of Calcutta. It has not been able to carry out that class of work for which there is both a popular demand and urgent need. The work of flushing unwholesome channels and stagnant swamps and restoring decayed rivers and blocked *khals* to activity."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, of the six river systems in Bengal let me speak about only one system, because time will not permit me to discuss all the system as a whole, I mean the Ganges system, with its several spill channels in Central Bengal flowing in a south-easterly direction. The Nadia and Jessore rivers are the two groups of spill channels of the Ganges. The Bhagirathi rises to prominence along with other rivers, the Kumar, the Bhairab, the Ichhamati and the Nabaganga. But what is the condition of the Nabaganga to-day? My esteemed friend Mr. Dutta Mazumdar asks me, "What about your Nabaganga?" If a curt and short reply is to be given, it is this: There is a proverb that the river Ganges was dried up at the sight of Ratnakar and to-day we can very well say the very same thing, that at the very sight of the present Cabinet our Nabaganga has almost dried up. (Laughter from the Opposition Benches.)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the question of Nabaganga is coming, let me narrate a few of the recommendations of the Drainage Committee of the year 1907 with regard to the district of Jessore. The first items of their recommendations are—

(*i*) The re-excavation of the Muchikhali Khal with the idea of bringing water from the Gorai into the Kumar near Magura.

(*ii*) the drainage of the country along the course of the Beng.

(*iii*) The drainage of the country along the course of the Betna.

(*iv*) A connection between the Kumar and Nabaganga near Madiar Howar in the Jhenida subdivision with the idea of bringing more water into the latter channel. A rough estimate of Rs. 10,000 has been mentioned as the likely cost. A suggestion to block the Dhopaghata Khal has also been made in order to keep the water of the Nabaganga in its own bed, which at present is here diverted.

(*v*) The deepening of the Bhowanipur Khal in the Jhenida subdivision with the same object, i.e., in order to bring water from the Kumar to the Nabaganga. This is said to be likely to cost Rs. 20,000".

Let me proceed to the comments of the Report where it is stated:—"Character of the country visited. The whole district in which the enquiry was carried out may be roughly divided into two portions—

(1) that to the north and east in which the rivers are not much silted up, are clear of weeds and have a good flow throughout the year. These rivers are principally the Kumar, Gorai, Madhumati and the portion of the Nabaganga below Magura and of the Chitra in the Narail subdivision;

(2) that to the west and south intersected by the upper portion of the Nabaganga, by the Chitra and the Bhairab, all of which are much silted up and blocked with weeds, and in dry weather become merely lines of stagnant pools".

I do not like to narrate any more from this report, but, Sir, in spite of these facts which were disposed of long ago and in spite of the fact that the late Rai Bahadur J. N. Mazumdar cried in the wilderness for the resuscitation of the rivers Bhairab and Nabaganga, Government have done nothing up to date. The only scheme, the Bhairab scheme, which they have introduced has been an utter failure. There has been an area of land which has been taken up, but without any result whatsoever, and perhaps the work has been abandoned by now. If the work is still in progress, we would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of that department, if at all it is in progress, what sort of progress it is and how far it is extended and how far and how long it will take to complete the scheme.

Now, I am coming back to the question of Jessore. Let me narrate a few lines more from the Drainage Committee's Report. Here they say "It is between Mathabhanga on the west and Madhumati in the east that the area par excellence of decaying rivers lies. Here the rivers Kumar, Nabaganga, Lower Bhairab and Ichhamati still remain as offshoots from the Mathabhanga towards the south-east until (with the exception of the Ichhamati) they encounter the waters of the Gorai and Madhumati, which coming by various channels of communication from the north-east give a general southward and south-westward trend to the river currents. Between the Kumar, Nabaganga, and Bhairab lie a network of connecting streams of which the best known are the Chitra, Beng, Katki, Kabatak, Harihar and Bhadra". I doubt very much whether the Hon'ble Minister has had the time to go there to inspect all these things personally. Has the Hon'ble Minister ever tried to ascertain the real conditions of these rivers? Has the Hon'ble Minister ever enquired into the matter whether there is a short cut road whereby these rivers can be improved to some extent? The Hon'ble Irrigation Minister after he has been acquainted with the department for four years has become an expert.

I would not be as strict with him as I was with the Hon'ble Mr. Suhrawardy, but I would like to point out to him that after four years' long experience, he has no idea whatsoever with regard to the irrigation requirements of my district. If he had any conception, if he had any imagination whatsoever, then the district could have been improved to a great extent. Whenever any question is put before the Hon'ble Minister he gives the excuse that the expert opinion is such and such. But who is that expert? What is his opinion? What is the constructive work that has been done during the last four years? No reply is given. This is the opinion, this is the idea which we have gathered from the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Irrigation Department.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so far as the Irrigation Department is concerned, it is a very technical department. It is not a department on which we can pass very sweeping remarks but we must know from the Hon'ble Minister what he has done up till now, what is his expert opinion, what is the opinion of the experts of his department and what is the achievement? It is no use setting up more committees which will result only in more money being spent from the provincial revenue. Has he been able to ascertain anything? Has he been able to go and visit those places? I want replies from him to all these questions. But I think he has none to give.

The Hon'ble the Finance Minister will be surprised to learn if we say that by expanding the staff, he will expand only the scandal and nothing more, because he has got no schemes. Unless and until the Hon'ble Minister leaves his chair in Writers' Buildings and goes there personally, there is no chance of any improvement whatsoever. By increasing the number of experts no tangible result will be forthcoming. I can assure him of this fact, but even if he without being an expert goes there and examines each and every item personally, I think the conditions will be improved to a great extent. There may be some technical difficulties. In that case I would like to tell the Hon'ble Minister that he should not remain tied to the chair when the budget is discussed and when lakhs and lakhs of rupees are being squandered by this department and that department. If Rs. 8 lakhs could be set apart for acquiring two plots of land for the High Court officials to be utilised after the termination of the war when the prices of these things will come to their normal level, surely the Hon'ble Minister must have had the opportunity to snatch away that Rs. 8 lakhs to be devoted for irrigation purposes. Has he got that courage? Has he got the initiative? Has he got the imagination? I think that he has none of these things. If I have to criticise the Hon'ble Minister, that is my misfortune. I have got no personal grudge against him. It is because of his indifference and because of his want of imagination that the

district is suffering and the people are crying. It is for that reason that I point out all these facts and figures so that good sense may dawn in him even at this fag-end of the term of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I draw a comparison with other countries, I can show that Bengal is the only province which is lagging by far behind other countries in the matter of irrigation. At the same time it is no exaggeration to say that Bengal has neglected irrigation most. The Central Government too neglected Bengal. The funds of the Government of India have been devoted to irrigation works, but their objective was military and that was the reason why Northern India benefited out of all irrigation schemes. But the Central Bengal has been left out of their imagination. If we compare Bengal with other countries like China Abyssinia, Mesopotamia, etc., we will know how far we have lagged behind. If we look at those countries, we will know how in those countries they control big rivers like the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates. If you read Sir William Wilcoc's books you will know how they control the current of those rivers, how they produce wealth and how they utilise them for the purpose of irrigation.

With these words, Sir, I beg to request the Hon'ble Minister to turn his attention to the river problem of Bengal. I would request him to leave Calcutta from time to time and go to the mufassal to study our irrigation problems. If he does that, I think my criticisms will have some effect——

The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: But I cannot go to Abyssinia.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: But I can tell you that for a proper study of Bengal's irrigation problems you have got to study the problems of Abyssina, you have got to study the problems of China. Only if you care to read the books of Sir William Wilcoc, then will you understand why for Bengal's irrigational improvement you have got to study the river channel of the Nile, that of the Euphrates and the Tigris. But if you only smile on while we criticise you and sit tight in the chair, you will never be able to realise the importance of Bengal's irrigation problem. If you read the books of Sir William Wilcoc you will understand what were the irrigation problems of the Moghul period and how the Moghul Rulers solved that problem. You have got to learn also as to how during the decline of the Moghul Rule, India's irrigation system was disorganised. Without going through all these matters you cannot understand the present position so far as irrigation is concerned.

With these words, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the honourable members and, if possible, that of the Hon'ble Minister to the criticisms that I have offered, and I hope the House will accept my amendment.

Mr. S. A. GOMES: Sir, I crave the indulgence of the House to say a few words on the grant for "Irrigation", in this province.

In doing so I wish to register the protest of my constituents in the district of Dacca against the grossly neglectful manner in which the department has treated their petition for widening the river Ichhamati at certain points, in its course, and thereby rendering it a navigable river all the year round.

I have spoken on this subject year after year during the past three years but to no effect. Details of the hardships which many thousands of inhabitants on either bank of the Ichhamati have to suffer for nearly half the year have been furnished to the Hon'ble Minister and repeated by me on the floor on this House over and over again. A monster petition duly signed by Christians, Hindus and Muslims was submitted four years ago but it failed to move the Hon'ble Minister to take action in the matter. The Hon'ble Minister's explanation is that Bengal has hundreds of rivers, big and small, that require attention. His department is proceeding on certain lines fixed by them. After other rivers on their scheme have been served then only the Ichhamati may have a chance.

In this manner of proceeding, the Ichhamati may not be reached in the next ten years or more. In the meantime thousands who are being inconvenienced and have to suffer from various diseases are, to grin, and bear patiently. Will the Hon'ble Minister not have pity on these helpless thousands and grant their prayer even at this late hour? The consolation of these people must be in the slogans "Better late than never", "Patience will be rewarded".

Sir, I fervently appeal to the Minister not to treat my people with indifference indefinitely. If big schemes are taken in hand, smaller rivers must not be totally neglected. Let the Government Engineers give the smaller rivers a chance too, and the inhabitants in the neighbourhood of these rivers will feel that the blessings of a popular Government are theirs, too.

If the Hon'ble Minister will direct his department to take up the improvement of the river Ichhamati during the coming year, I am sure he will earn the lasting gratitude of thousands of Christians, Hindus and Muslims and these people will be convinced that the present Government is really a fatherly Government which has the well-being of the inhabitants in every part of the Province at heart, being ready to extend a helping hand everywhere.

Sir I end my appeal to the Hon'ble Minister for Irrigation in this Province with the earnest hope that he will help without delay.

Maulvi MD. ABDUR RASHEED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to participate in the general discussion on the main budget demand under the head "Irrigation".

Sir, in my opinion the Department of Irrigation is the most important one as it vitally concerns the great bulk of the teeming millions of the agriculturists. This is the department which can truly be called a nation-building one. But, it is sad to reflect, there is no major policy which governs the operation of this department. The present Government is only tinkering with problems of local importance and has yet to launch any scheme of national province wide character.

Sir, the problem of Bengal is the problem of irrigation. For, our country is essentially an agricultural one. And at the present time our agriculturists have to depend entirely upon the vagaries of nature for the success of their crop. The result is that if there is any excess of rain their fields are inundated and the crops destroyed by flood and, on the other hand, if there be scarcity of rain then too the crops fail. To make matters worse unscientific and unsystematic—or I should say unsympathetic construction of railway bridges has obstructed the natural drainage of our country with the result that floods have become the usual order of things. Sir, in these days of scientific advance it can be legitimately expected that the problem can be tackled so effectively that the risk of failure of crops due to excess or scarcity of rain can be altogether eliminated.

Sir, paddy is the only crop in the district of Birbhum from where I come. And Government statistics show that in the last 131 years we had full crop only in 11 years, no crop in 30 years and partial crop varying from 2 annas to 12 annas for the remaining period. Sir, this is truly a sorry state of affairs. I might mention that this year too my district has had a failure of crop resulting in acute economic distress which is still prevailing. From the figures quoted it is apparently manifest that there is partial famine almost every year in Birbhum. This leads to disease and pestilence because the vitality of the agriculturists is sapped away by starvation and semi-starvation diet. And due to the low vitality they are also subject to the ravages of malaria which has become a great menace and unless checked now may result in depopulation of this vast district. Therefore, it has now become imperative that something must be done to ameliorate the sad condition of the masses.

Sir, I understand this question engaged the attention of Government and as a result More scheme or Massanjore project for the districts of Birbhum, Burdwan and Murshidabad has been prepared but unfortunately effect is not being given to it. I, therefore, strongly appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to place this subject before the House and obtain its sanction during the present session. The people of these three districts can ill-afford to wait for another year at considerable loss of lives and properties.

Sir, even this More or Massanjore project to which I have referred touches only the fringe of the problem. While such projects

admittedly confer some benefit to the people, I would like to urge the tackling of the major problem of irrigation in a more comprehensive and all-embracing manner. But before any serious attempt is made, I would draw the attention of the Government to survey the position created by the erection of railway embankments and unsympathetic construction of railway bridges to which I have referred earlier. This has been done by the railways in order to cut down costs of construction without considering what damage would be done to the natural flow of the river or the natural drainage of the country. The position must, therefore, be surveyed and necessary steps taken to enforce the opening out of more bridges and culverts or widening the existing bridges. Unless this is done I maintain in all seriousness the position is hardly likely to improve by tinkering with problems of irrigation as we are doing now.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by the Hon'ble Minister. We, Sir, on this side of the House support the policy, the policy I repeat, which has hitherto been pursued by the department. We support that policy in its broad outlines but that does not necessarily mean that we have not from time to time criticisms and some constructive advice to offer.

Now, the first point I wish to make is this. From both sides of the House has come the argument that there is no policy. This question of irrigation, Sir, requires to be viewed from the point of view of realism. When the Hon'ble Minister was delivering his speech you might have thought that he was at a tea party. There was so little interest in the House in this subject, which every one says, repeating the old platitudes, is the life blood of the people who have sent them here to represent them. The position must be viewed realistically and the responsibility for the policy of the department rests not so much on the shoulders of the Ministry as on the shoulders of the members of this House. The Ministry is working towards, and has indeed to a very large extent completed, a comprehensive policy for the province. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Such as the Waterways Board!) Have a little patience. Let there be no mistake about that.

The Ministry, when it came into office, found a department which was considerably depleted from the point of view of staff and it was necessary to review the position. It was a physical impossibility to frame any plan with the staff which was at that time available. (Mr. NALINI RANJAN SARKER: Do you know how many posts are vacant?) May I request the honourable member to exercise a little patience. I shall deal with that immediately.

Mr. NALINI RANJAN SARKER: But not exercise overpatience. Don't say things which you do not know.

Mr. M. A. F. HIRTZEL: The position, Sir, is that schemes for irrigating more than one million acres of land are to-day completed. Those schemes if put into effect will cost Rs. 6½ crores. Now, the nearest time or any concrete suggestion as to when those schemes will be put into effect was in the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister this evening. It is reasonable to assume in any case that none of those schemes can be put into effect until after the war. They will at that time be of immense value if they can then be put into effect, because obviously they will provide a very considerable amount of employment at a very difficult time. But the necessity if those schemes are ever to be taken down from the shoulders of the Irrigation Department and made the foundation of renewed prosperity in West Bengal is that they should be to some extent on a commercial basis.

The improved yield on the Damodar Canal land amounted in the case of best quality land to something like Rs. 38 an acre and in the case of an inferior type of land to Rs. 11 an acre. Take the average of Rs. 15 an acre. Then it will bring in an additional income of rupees one crore and fifty lakhs. If those schemes could only be put into effect, they would undoubtedly revolutionise the life of the province; but the fact remains that owing to the policy pursued in the case of the Damodar Canal, a policy which was forced upon the Government by the action of some of those mischievous persons of whom we have heard a certain amount this session, those schemes are to-day farther from any likelihood of being realised than perhaps they have ever been before.

Now, Sir, I suggest in all seriousness the fact—and it is a fact—that to-day from a practical point of view this department is a dole department. It is at present only carrying out small schemes. For that fact, Sir, the members of this House are more responsible than any one else. It is the duty of the members of this House to take a broad view, not to concentrate on local schemes for their own district, to see to the prosperity of the province as a whole, and having seen it to go out into the district and endeavour to persuade their constituents that the policy which Government is seeking to pursue is a sound one, and not merely to sit down quietly with the burden of complaints about the small amount that is being given to their own particular district.

Now, Sir, I refer to the various small schemes which are being taken up. There is enough work here to last a considerable number of years. If we turn to page 31 of the Irrigation Department booklet, we find that the schemes now taken up total an expenditure of Rs. 20½ lakhs approximately, excluding Rs. 50,000 voted annually for local schemes. Up to the end of 1941-42, the period of the current budget, only Rs. 8½ lakhs will have been spent on those schemes. That will leave a balance of very nearly Rs. 12 lakhs to be completed, or another three

years' work. I, therefore, appeal to the honourable members of this House to take a realistic view of the position. It is no use whatever providing extra staff merely to pile up schemes that are on paper. The department certainly has a fair claim to a larger portion of finance and without that it can never succeed in really carrying into effect the policy which it has drawn up. But the work needs not only money; it needs also the necessary staff to carry it out. And on this point I must suggest to the Hon'ble Minister that possibly there should have been some more pressure put on. Referring to the Civil List dated the 1st of January, one finds that out of 12 Executive Engineers 4 officers have now gone on war service. The sanctioned strength of Assistant Executive Engineers is 9 of whom only 4 are at present in employment, leaving 5 still to be engaged. The sanctioned strength of Assistant Engineers is 23 and of these only 16 are at present engaged leaving a further 7 to be taken on.

Sir, I would like to conclude my remarks by saying that it is very satisfactory to us on this side of the House to see that at last there is a small grant for the Research Institute. This has been the subject of some gibes but it is commonsense that on this Research Institute depends the entire success of any irrigation policy, more particularly with reference to navigation and drainage. We should in fact have been very glad to see this Research Institute brought into effect straightaway. Perhaps next year we may have to see a larger grant for it. We should also like to express satisfaction at the success even after very considerable delay which has attended so far the formation of the Inter-Provincial Commission for the Brahmaputra. We can only hope that the Hon'ble Minister will be successful in pushing the claims of the Ganges Commission also. It is unnecessary—but still I do it—to emphasise once again the vital importance to Bengal of the securing of water.

Babu UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Sir, I beg to move that the demand for Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100.

In this House, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation, has demonstrated how his department has carried out the policy of Government so far as the irrigational problem throughout the whole of Bengal is concerned and the members of this House have criticised the Hon'ble Minister regarding that policy. My submission is that much may be said on both sides, regarding the policy as well as the inadequate undertaking of the department concerned. But the irony is that so far as North Bengal is concerned, the Hon'ble Minister has not followed that policy. The only thing that he can point out, is that his department has recently taken up the contour survey of North

Bengal and nothing more. Even on that matter it may be pointed out, that though the scheme itself, namely, the contour survey of North Bengal contemplated an expenditure of Rs. 3,95,000, only Rs. 25,000 has been provided in the budget for the year 1940-41, and so far as this scheme is concerned in the budget under discussion only Rs. 35,000 has been provided. I ask the Hon'ble Minister whether he is earnest about the irrigational undertakings in North Bengal. On a rough calculation if matters proceed in this way it will take at least 10 years to finish the contour survey. It is evident, that so far as the irrigational problem of North Bengal is concerned, the Ministry does not contemplate that anything should be done during the coming five years. After the contour survey is completed, we will have to consider schemes, estimates, financial difficulties and so on. To speak shortly, the Hon'ble Minister is not earnest about the irrigational needs of North Bengal at all.

I know, Sir, that irrigational matter is a subject which is important all over Bengal and though I speak about the needs of North Bengal, I realise that money spent in other parts of Bengal is a necessity. If the Bengal peasantry is to live, the Bengal Government must spend for it. If we look at the budget, we find that though the Bengal Government have limited resources they have spent enormous sums throughout other parts of Bengal and that they have neglected North Bengal entirely. Under head "17" we find that as much as Rs. 20,70,000 is charged under "Interest". Now under adjustments with the Central Government the capital that is involved in the irrigational works in Bengal has been liquidated or adjusted. Nevertheless that amount was actually spent and spent in other parts of Bengal without spending a pie in North Bengal. The interest has been calculated at 4 per cent. and if we calculate from that, it becomes evident that as much as Rs. 5 crores has been spent already by the previous Government in respect of matters of irrigation, embankment, drainage, etc. Thus about Rs. 2 crores has been spent on irrigation and Rs. 3 crores under other heads. That is one aspect of the matter before the Provincial Autonomy came into being. After the present Ministry has come into power, we find that year after year a huge sum is being spent. So far as the present budget is concerned, we find that as much as Rs. 26,54,000 is going to be spent in the coming year. Out of that the working expenses come to Rs. 8,55,000, maintenance and repairs Rs. 6,45,000, and works in progress Rs. 3,74,000. So we cannot say that even with the present limited resources of the present Government, the revenue receipts are not quite enough to spend any large amount. They are actually spending money, but so far as North Bengal is concerned, only Rs. 35,000 has been provided for in the budget for a project which will require as much as Rs. 3,95,000. I would ask this Government and the Hon'ble Minister in charge: what

is the idea of the Ministry about North Bengal? Does the Hon'ble Minister think that North Bengal can wait until this contour survey is completed and until the needs of all other parts of Bengal are met with adequate funds? So far as I can see from the answers to questions that have been put from time to time they think that North Bengal is a part of the province where rainfall is heaviest. At one time, in answer to one of my questions the Hon'ble Minister in charge has said that Jalpaiguri is a district where there is the greatest rainfall in rural Bengal. I want to say this much to the Cabinet that they are entirely ignorant of the conditions so far as North Bengal is concerned. There is no doubt that rainfall is heaviest there but the condition of the soil is entirely different. It has a porous soil. The soil is entirely sandy. If there is continuous rain for three or four days then of course the land is surcharged with water, but if there be no rain for one or two days the whole water passes away through the porous soil and even *haimantic* paddy does not get enough water. That is the condition there.

Recently my friend Mr. Khagendra Nath Das Gupta put a question to the Hon'ble Minister asking whether he is aware that in North Bengal there has been failure of crops. The Hon'ble Minister replied "no". I put a supplementary question to enquire whether there was partial failure and the Hon'ble Minister replied in the negative. Sir, only two days before that, the Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division held a durbar in Dinajpur and in that durbar speech he pointed out that due to failure of rain there had been partial failure of paddy in North Bengal. Even in places where there was not so much dearth of rain, it is a fact that only eight annas paddy has been grown this year, due to the effect of the rains and due to the condition of the soil obtaining there. Now, Sir, in North Bengal there are small and big rivers carrying with them from the Himalayas fertilising silts. If by means of an irrigation project we can utilise that silt, I think North Bengal can become the most fruitful soil in the whole of Bengal; but if that is not done, if it be neglected for a number of years, the people of that locality will be ruined economically and famine will be the result. I therefore appeal to the Hon'ble Minister not to forget the case of North Bengal. We find, Sir, that the Ministry has been spending enough money for irrigation works throughout the whole of Bengal, except North Bengal. My appeal, therefore, is to start irrigation works in North Bengal. Even contour survey is being neglected which clearly proves that the Ministry is not alive to the demands of North Bengal. I also beg to submit that while contour survey and other things are being done in North Bengal, adequate financial help in the shape of subsidy should also be forthcoming for small irrigational projects. My grievance is that even a small irrigation project, costing a sum of Rs. 1,500 of which only 1/3rd was suggested to be contributed by Government has not met with their approval.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is prayer time now, Mr. Barman, and I would request you to stop here. You will be given five minutes more to speak after the prayer adjournment.

(At this stage the House was adjourned for fifteen minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

Babu UPENDRA NATH BARMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I have said, North Bengal is labouring under a two-fold sense of wrong. Firstly, there has been no big scheme to ameliorate the condition of agriculturists of that part of the province by launching upon any irrigational scheme. Though the Ministry has undertaken a contour survey of that part, yet the sum provided this year and the sum going to be provided in the coming year are too inadequate to meet the financial aspect of the scheme, because though as much as Rs. 3 lakhs 95 thousand is required for that purpose, only Rs. 35,000 has been provided for. So, it seems that the Ministry is not earnest about the fulfilment of the irrigational needs of North Bengal. Secondly, Sir, though Rs. 50,000 has been provided for to go on with small irrigational projects of other districts, North Bengal has been left out. So far as irrigation is concerned, our part of the province has been most neglected.

Sir, I have brought this motion not with the purpose of opposing the main demand on irrigation, because that will mean that I am unsympathetic to the irrigational needs of other parts of the province. That is not my real intention. My motion is only intended to bring home to the Ministry the necessities of North Bengal and I hope my North Bengal friends will not go against this motion because that will be the unkindest cut of all.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100.

Sir, much of the wind out of the sail of the Opposition has been taken out by the Hon'ble Minister by admitting that he and his department have failed all these four years to do any appreciable work. Not only he, the Hon'ble Finance Minister also in his statement admitted that from all parts of the province came the cry of dead and dying rivers, of water-logged areas, of inundations by saline water, of *beels* to be drained, of *khals* to be re-excavated, of spill areas to be cleared for resuscitating dead and drying rivers—measures on which depend not only the fertility of the soil but also the health and life of the people, and yet the Government had failed to adopt any measures worth the name.

In the face of these admissions of failure I feel, Sir, that I need not indulge in bitter criticisms of the irrigation policy pursued by Government all these four years. But I wonder how Mr. Hirtzel could support the Government policy with regard to irrigation when the Hon'ble Minister himself admitted that he had no comprehensive policy. The sum and substance of the Hon'ble Minister's statement to-night is that he has only studied the problems of irrigation all these four years and he will now begin to take action and that also after some surveys and investigations and researches are made. That being the position which Government has taken, I do not understand how could my honourable friend Mr. Hirtzel congratulate the Minister for his speech and for the irrigation budget.

Sir, I find in the statement of the Hon'ble Finance Minister that he complains that here again—he means the Department of Irrigation —the number of officers is so inadequate that it is impossible for them to tackle more than a fraction of the many complex problems with which the department is flooded. But, Sir, I draw your attention and the attention of the House to the budget which the Hon'ble Finance Minister has presented. From the budget, I find that apart from the working expenses on irrigation works, I mean the famous canals of the Burdwan Division, under "Navigation, Embankment, and Drainage" the establishments cost the Government Rs. 11 lakhs 50 thousand, although the cost of maintenance and repairs under that head is separately shown as Rs. 7,95,000. The Hon'ble Minister owes an explanation to this House why so much establishment expenses are required only for doing drainage works valued not more than Rs. 3,75,000. (The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Much more.) No, it is not much more. You will find it from the budget demand which you have yourself presented. Sir, the entire demand under the head "Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works" is Rs. 25,67,000. Out of this, the demand for works is Rs. 3,75,000; maintenance and repairs Rs. 7,95,000; establishment Rs. 11,50,000; other charges Rs. 51,000; tools and plants Rs. 1,02,000; grants-in-aid including Central Government grant-in-aid Rs. 71,000 and the charges in England Rs. 23,000. These comprise the entire demand of Rs. 25,67,000. To these have been added the working expenses of Rs. 8,55,000, being the expenses incurred for the irrigation works of the Burdwan Division, I mean the canals, the total of which comes up to Rs. 34,22,000. That is the amount of the total grant.

How can the Hon'ble Minister, therefore, now say that the sum of Rs. 11,50,000 is not being spent on establishment to execute works worth Rs. 3,75,000 only? The Hon'ble Minister has told us very frankly that his department has not been able to do any appreciable

work during all these four years. How will he then justify himself and his department in appropriating year after year so much money out of the public revenue on establishment alone? I demand a reply.

The Hon'ble Minister has further told us that resuscitation of the dead and dying rivers is a necessity. When this is admitted, I ask him what steps have Government taken towards this big problem, namely, the problem of resuscitation of the dead and dying rivers? He will perhaps say that an institute for river research is being established at a cost of Rs. 5,96,000 for which this budget contains a sum of Rs. 20,000 only. My friends opposite will please note that out of this estimate of Rs. 5,96,000 which the Hon'ble Minister wants for the establishment of a river research institute to help him to draw up a scheme for the resuscitation of the dead and dying rivers, only a sum of Rs. 20,000 will be spent during the next year. Is that sufficient? The Hon'ble Minister owes us an explanation why he has provided such a small sum under this head, when the estimate is so big.

Sir, I do not understand how this institute will work, but I have heard the Hon'ble Minister say that there will be model rivers in the laboratory of this institute, and by looking at each model, of course scientifically, they will study the course of the river and the velocity of the current. Good. But, Sir, I want to ask the Hon'ble Minister to make one thing clear. Although I am not an engineer, nor an expert, yet as a layman and having a little commonsense——

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Question! (Laughter.)

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: My Hon'ble friend Mr. Tamizuddin Khan thinks that everybody in this House has become wanting in commonsense as the Ministers have become.

I ask the Hon'ble Minister has he consulted the other interested Provincial Governments—the Governments of the Punjab, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa and Assam with regard to this institute? (The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Yes.) Will those Governments co-operate with the Hon'ble Minister in connection with the research work of this institute? Will those Provincial Governments also co-operate with him in resuscitating those portions of the main rivers which are within their respective provinces? If so, good. If not, there lies the danger. I warn the Hon'ble Minister that resuscitation of the rivers here and there will not help this province. The resuscitation of the whole lengths of the main rivers, I mean the Ganges, the Jamuna, and the Brahmaputra, has become essential and urgent. The upper portions of those rivers and their branches and tributaries have become almost silted up. Resuscitation of those portions has become more necessary than the resuscitation of the portions down below, because deep water in the higher

portions automatically deepens the beds of the lower portions. Sir, when we go outside the boundaries of Bengal we find all these rivers carrying sands in their bosoms, but that was not their condition before. Really they had deep water and the current had great velocity. All that water used to flow from the highest mountain of India, I mean the Himalayas, down to the sea, and that deep water with its speedy current was the best fertiliser in that its current would enable the river water to percolate into the porous soil of lands on both sides of the rivers and thus miles and miles of lands all along those rivers used to be irrigated and fertilised. That is called natural irrigation. I have explained how by virtue of its current the deep water contained in the rivers do enter into the land up to certain breadth and depth. I shall now explain how such water fertilises the land. Coal and similar inflammable substances lying below that depth come in contact with that water and produce moisture and that moisture moistens the land. This is called fertilisation. In Bengal, well-fertilized land is called *saras bhumi*, i.e., land having *rash*, that is, moisture. I want to submit that artificial irrigation will not help the development of the fertility of our lands. If our lands are to be fertilised these main rivers and their branches should be resuscitated right through. It is by such natural irrigation alone that our lands can be fertilised. I repeat, Sir, that artificial irrigation by digging canals of ordinary depth out of these rivers and making the water flow with little or no current into the interior through these canals will not sufficiently fertilise the land. The Hon'ble Minister ought to remember how much the fertility of the land in our country has fallen. If he reads history and statistics he will find that the average paddy or wheat production of 7 maunds per *bigha* in 1876 has fallen down to about 3½ maunds of paddy or wheat per *bigha* in the thirties of the 20th century. So great has been the fall in the fertility of the land. The fall in the fertility has been the cause of ruination of the peasantry of our country. This is a great agrarian problem and it must be solved if agriculture and agriculturists are to be saved. I am happy that Government after four years have come to their senses and admit that the dead and dying rivers ought to be resuscitated. I shall be happier if Government proceed in the right direction.

Then, Sir, I find that a paltry sum of Rs. 3,75,000 has been provided for doing some navigation and drainage works during the next year. But there is no provision under "Embankments," although there has been a cry that saline water entering into the lands near the sea is damaging the crops of a vast tract of land. I am not going to deal with that question any more. I leave that to other speakers who will follow me. Sir, I fail to understand why such a paltry sum of money has been budgeted for navigation and drainage works. While the Government admit that from all parts of the province come the cry of water-logged areas, of *bheels* to be drained, of dried up canals

to be re-excavated and and of new canals to be excavated, I ask the Hon'ble Minister why such a small sum of Rs. 3,75,000 has been provided for to meet those cries? Why this apology of grant for meeting this grave problem of the peasantry who, you say, form the life of the nation? The Hon'ble Minister will surely plead want of funds. But, Sir, funds were not wanting to provide for more than nine lakhs of rupees for the extraordinary police. Funds were not wanting also for purchasing a plot of land at the cost of Rs. 8 lakhs for Government office. But funds are wanting to improve agriculture. Sir, such has been the agricultural policy of our popular Government. God knows if and when it will change.

I shall, however, concentrate my attention on the works that have been undertaken for the next year. I find that out of an estimate of probably Rs. 55,000 there is a provision for Rs. 20,000 for a chord cut to connect the upper Kumar with the lower Kumar for the purpose of improving the lower Kumar. As far as I understand the southern portion of the upper Kumar between Kavirajpur and Mahendradi will be closed to give a chance to that cut to carry clear water to the lower Kumar. I very much doubt the success of that cut. On the other hand, I am afraid, the effect will be that the lower Kumar will be absolutely closed to navigation towards the north and west, with the result that the subdivision of Madaripur in the district of Faridpur will be almost closed from the outside world. There were three openings for this subdivision, one towards the west on the Khulna side, through the Bil route and the Madhumati, one towards the Padma on the north through the Arial Khal river and another towards the Padma on the north-east through the Naria river. The last named route has been closed; the route through the Arial Khal river has almost been closed and the Bil route also is going to be closed. But Government seem to have closed their eyes against such a serious situation. Dredging has been discontinued——

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. SURENDRA NATH BISWAS: Only one sentence more, Sir.

If now the lower Kumar is further damaged by this chord cut, then the whole of South Faridpur will become a water-logged area. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will not proceed with this cut, before he is sure of success in improving the lower Kumar thereby.

Mr. C. MORGAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion for grant moved by the Hon'ble Minister for Civil Works. Last year when speaking on roads, I congratulated the department on the definite and satisfactory progress that had been made since my criticism in this House the year before. I desire, Sir, again

to congratulate the Hon'ble Minister and his department on the position to-day. The financial position at the moment is satisfactory, and the running balance at the end of 1940-41 is Rs. 30,30,114 which is barely sufficient to finance one year's estimated expenditure. But the most interesting point in the financial position is that the amount received from the Central Government for the year 1940-41 has increased to Rs. 19,31,000 against Rs. 15,53,574 in 1938-39, the year regarding which I criticised the activities of the department.

To my mind this shows that road construction and maintenance have enabled an increasing use by motor transport and thereby an increasing consumption of petrol, and it is on the consumption of petrol that the amount we received from the Central Government is based. Therefore, in this connection I would like to put forward to Government a suggestion, and that is, that in order to increase traffic and get more money from petrol consumption, roads, which have already been taken in hand, should be finished in their entirety as soon as possible rather than bit by bit each year. To give an instance, I would draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to the position of the Tangail-Mymensingh road. In reply to a question, the Hon'ble Minister said that this road would be completed at the end of 1945, provided funds and materials were available. Now, Sir, I have information that the traffic on this road would increase considerably when the total mileage is completed. This is only one instance, and I would ask the Hon'ble Minister to give his attention to this aspect of road construction.

I certainly deprecate any question of construction of roads being brought before this House as non-official resolutions. I refer particularly to resolution in Part I, No. 1 in the list of business for non-official resolutions on the 14th February, 1941, in which my honourable friend Mr. Azhar Ali moved that the construction of trunk road No. 26 in Pabna be taken in hand in preference to other roads. Such questions must be left to the Provincial Board of Communications who advise Government on these matters.

Now, Sir, with regard to the new Motor Spirit Sales Taxation Bill, I would like to have definite figures from the Hon'ble Minister or the Hon'ble the Finance Minister, as to what exactly will be the proportion of the tax collected to be divided between schemes which have already been approved by the Government of India and schemes from Mr. King's report which will be put before the Provincial Board of Communications for approval. We can trust the Board to put forward the most appropriate schemes, but I would like to know the amount of money that is likely to be available for each of these two channels of road construction.

Once again I must draw attention to the damage done to roads by bullock-carts. By this I mean bullock-carts which are used for transport on main roads. I am not referring to bullock-cart traffic between

villages and across paddy fields. In my opinion there should certainly be a licence fee imposed on all bullock-carts using main roads, as the damage done by these carts is enormous, and owners of carts pay nothing towards maintenance.

In this connection the question of rubber tyres for bullock-carts comes in. It has been put to me that it might be possible to use old and discarded rubber tyres on the existing wheels of bullock-carts by some method of binding old tyres over the iron rims. In this way the cutting of the surface of roads by these iron rims would be mitigated.

In conclusion, I trust the department will maintain its present efficiency and rate of progress. Sir, I support the motion.

Maulvi MAFIZUDDIN AHMED: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to put in a few words by way of criticising Government's failure to tackle some of the largest and most serious problems of the country in the Irrigation Department. Year after year lakhs of rupees are provided in the budget for irrigation. But the way in which the money is spent indicates that all is not well somewhere. It rather betrays lack of imagination and want of proper planning and scheme. Bengal being an agricultural country, the importance and utility of the Irrigation Department can hardly be over-estimated. Sir, without generalising further, let me take a particular case. I take up the case of Tippera. Sir, Tippera is a forbidden land so far as the Department of Irrigation is concerned, although Tippera is the district which needs the help of the department the most. Year after year both within and outside this House, both in the press and from the platform the pointed attention of the Bengal Government has been drawn to the devastating havoc committed upon the crops, properties and lives of the poor agriculturists living both north and south of the Gumti river by the all-devouring floods. But to what effect? It is reported that Government has been examining different ways and means to find a solution. Years have rolled away and much water has flown down the Gumti, but the problem stands where it was; rather with more virulent ferocity. This would show the incompetence of the department people. If they cannot find a satisfactory solution to this all-engrossing problem, then I fail to see the justification of maintaining the white elephants of the department at the cost of the public exchequer. Sir, the situation has reached its highest climax. The country cannot wait any longer. Some solution must be found to combat the standing and recurring nuisance. There were some proposals for strengthening and extending the embankment. There were other proposals for knocking off the existing embankment altogether, of course after making proper safeguards for the town of Comilla. Much can be said for and against both the proposals. We do not want any more wrangling on theory.

We have had enough of it. The experts must come to a definite decision which should be taken up by the Government for execution without further delay.

Sir, another pressing necessity for Northern Tippera is the re-excavation of the Audd Khal running through Comilla Sadar North subdivision and Brahmanbaria subdivision. This is a local need for drainage and trade facilities. I moved the Government in this matter. Government has taken up no doubt the matter in hand, but the machinery moves so slowly that it is apprehended that generations will pass off before it takes a tangible shape. I would like to draw the pointed attention of the Government to this question and trust that the hopes and aspirations of the agriculturists of a vast tract of land will materialise as soon as practicable. The rivers Titash and Dakatia are also sources of menace to people and these problems also should be tackled. The dead and dying rivers should be resuscitated.

In conclusion, I would like to demand an assurance from the Hon'ble Minister that he would give more attention to Tippera hitherto neglected.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, Mr. Morgan has rightly stated that there is a large saving in the Communications Department as the Hon''ble Minister could not make out a scheme to spend that amount, and he has requested the Hon'ble Minister to spend the same amount this year. There has been a saving from year to year and there has been criticism of this policy by the Audit Committee. Still the Hon'ble Minister's department has not taken any care of it. From the Report of the Public Accounts Committee for 1938-39 we find a criticism to this effect: "In regard to the grant under 'Irrigation' we observe that large amounts were provided in the budget which were subsequently not found necessary and these were either surrendered or reappropriated and even after reappropriation considerable amounts were surrendered. We deprecate such procedure and hope that steps will be taken to secure closer budgeting in future." That was, Sir, in the year 1938-39. Then, Sir, in the Report on Appropriation of Accounts for 1939-40 and the Audit Report for 1941 it has been stated by the committee: "The savings under 'Irrigation' were mainly due to the delay in the formation of the Waterways Board and to the postponement of some schemes of rural reconstruction and parts of the provision for service, maintenance and repair have not been utilised. The saving under the head 'Irrigation' was 15·9 per cent."

Now, Sir, it is absolutely necessary that the Waterways Board scheme should be taken into account. Had Government really wanted to resuscitate dead and dying rivers, the Waterways Board could have

been set up and provided, and I hope Government will take some steps in this direction this year.

I would request the Hon'ble Minister to think that there are other districts in this province besides Dacca and Barisal in East Bengal. He should have taken care of the district of Tippera. From the year 1937 or even prior to that, the people of Tippera have been trying to impress upon the Government the need of some scheme so that the people of that locality might be saved. There were petitions, there were people waiting upon the Hon'ble Minister to represent their grievances. The Hon'ble Minister time after time gave us assurances that he will see that something is done, but, Sir, though this is the last year of this Ministry's régimé, we do not find anything in the budget to show that he has really taken up the case of the people of Tippera. It has been stated that the matter is under their consideration. It will be under their consideration—I do not know for how long—before the people of Tippera get any remedy. Every year there have been inundations; every year the people on both sides of the Gumti suffer for want of crops because the crops are destroyed by the flood of rivers and at the time when help is urgently needed, Government scarcely come to help the people. It is the public who help them. Sir, it is of the utmost importance that Government should take the matter up in right earnest and do something for these poor people. There are as many as six representatives from the district of Tippera in the Coalition Group, and we hoped that at least these people do something to influence the Hon'ble Minister to take some steps in this direction, but our hope was frustrated. They simply make some speeches and get some assurance from the Hon'ble Minister and with that they sit tight without caring to do anything else. They tell the people: "We have made speeches, but what shall we do if the Hon'ble Minister does not do anything?" That is the reason for the speeches by my friends over there.

Then Sir, regarding the river Teetash, it is a long-felt grievance of the people of Brahmanbaria. Akhaura is situated on the river, but the business is at a standstill owing to the failure of boats and steamers passing through the river. Government should take some steps in that direction. The only navigable *khal* in the district of Tippera is Boaljari Khal running from the southern part of the Chandpur subdision up to the middle of the Sadar subdivision of the district of Tippera. On the banks of this *khal* there are jute centres, and boats ply throughout the year. Only in some parts of the months of *Falgun* and *Chaitra* boats cannot ply and excavation is necessary, and I therefore implore the Hon'ble Minister to see that steps be taken so that boats can ply throughout the year. I say, Sir, that in the district of Tippera there is no other navigable *khal* except this *khal*.

With these words, I support the motion of my honourable friend.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,55,71,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, সিভিল ওয়ার্কের জন্য যে ১,৫৫,৭১,০০০৲ টাকা বরাদ্দ করা হোয়েছে আমি তা থেকে ১০০৲ টাকা ছাঁটাই প্রস্তাব আনয়ন কোরছি। আমার এই প্রস্তাবের উদ্দেশ্য হোচ্ছে চলাচলের সুবিধা ও উন্নতির জন্য এবং বর্ত্তমানে যে অবস্থা আছে তা আরো উন্নত ধরনের এবং সংশোধন করার জন্য। সাধারণতঃ দেশের জনসাধারণের চলা ফেরা করবার জন্য রাস্তা ঘাট, এবং সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কৃষকদের উৎপন্ন কৃষিজাত দ্রব্যের বেচা কেনার সুবিধার জন্য রাস্তার প্রয়োজন, সে রাস্তা দুই প্রকার যেমন জলপথ ও স্থলপথ। বাংলার জল পথ গুলি প্রায়ই নষ্ট হোয়ে গিয়েছে, স্থল পথের অবস্থাও অনুরূপ। স্থলপথ গুলি অধিকাংশ ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট বোর্ডের হাতে রোয়েছে। এবং ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট বোর্ড গুলি কি ভাবে কাজ কোরছেন তা বাংলার জনসাধারন বেশ ভাল রকমই জানেন। বিশেষ আশা ছিল গভর্ণমেণ্টের তহবিলের টাকা হোতে, বিশেষ কোরে ভারত গভর্ণমেণ্ট হোতে প্রতি বৎসর যে মোটা টাকা পাওয়া যায় এবং যে টাকাটা রোড বোর্ডের হাতে দেওয়া হয়, সেই টাকা দিয়ে বাংলার রাস্তা ঘাটের উন্নতি সাধন করা হবে। সেই সমস্ত টাকা দিয়ে সাধারণতঃ দেখা যায় কলিকাতা সহরে এবং কলিকাতার আশে পাশে বড় বড় রাস্তা করা হয়। আর এই টাকার সামান্য মাত্র অংশ, ছিটা ফোঁটা মত বাংলার আপামর জনসাধারণের ব্যবহার্য্য রাস্তাঘাটের জন্য ব্যয়িত হয়, কিন্তু এই প্রকারের রাস্তা নির্ম্মাণ কাজ গুলি কখনও সুচারুরূপে সম্পন্ন হইতে দেখি নাই। আমার জেলা ময়মনসিং হোতে টাঙ্গাইল পর্য্যন্ত একটা রাস্তা কয়েক বৎসর যাবৎ আরম্ভ হোয়েছে। কিন্তু এমন ভাবে কার্য্য চোলেছে যে এ কার্য্য কবে শেষ হবে তা বলা কঠিন। আমার আশঙ্কা হয় যে কোনদিন আবার বাংলার সরকার যুদ্ধের অজুহাতে সেই কাজটা বন্ধ কোরে দেবেন তাও নিশ্চয় কোরে বলা যায় না। এই সব টাকার দ্বারা বড় বড় রাস্তা করার প্রয়োজন আছে সেটা অস্বীকার করি না। কিন্তু আমার মনে হয় বাংলার কৃষক জনসাধারণের কৃষিজাত দ্রব্যাদি ক্রয় বিক্রয় করবার জন্য জল পথে ও স্থল পথে যথেষ্ট রাস্তার প্রয়োজন আছে। সাধারণতঃ আমাদের দেশের পল্লীঅঞ্চলে গো-মহিষাদির গাড়ী ব্যবহার করা হয় কিন্তু রাস্তা ঘাট ভাল না হইলে গরু মহিষের গাড়ী চোলতে পারে না। গো মহিষের গাড়ীতে ও বাজারে জিনিষ পত্র বেচা কেনা কোর্ত্তে অনেক সময়ের দরকার। যদি মটর গাড়ী কোরে জিনিষ ক্রয় বিক্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা হয় তাহ'লে কৃষক জনসাধারণের অনেক সুবিধা হোতে পারে। সেই দিকে গভর্ণমেণ্টের কোন দৃষ্টি পোড়ছে না। চারি বৎসর শেষ হোয়ে গেল। এই কয় বৎসরে বাংলার জনসাধারণের সুবিধার জন্য বাংলার মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী কি কোরেছেন তার হিসাব যদি নেওয়া যায় তাহোলে দেখা যায় সামান্য ছিটে ফোঁটা ছাড়া যথেষ্ট কাজ হয় নাই। বরং সেই সব টাকা কোথা দিয়ে উড়ে গেছে, কোথায় কি ভাবে আছে সেই সব যদি হিসাব নেওয়া যায় তাহলে মনে হয় অনেক গোপন ব্যাপার ধরা পড়ে যাবে। বিশেষ কোরে আমাদের ময়মনসিং জেলার পশ্চিমে যমুনা নদী, পূবে মেঘনা ও ঘোড়াউত্রা নদী এবং মধ্যদিয়া ব্রহ্মপুত্র নদ প্রবাহিত হোয়েছে এবং মধ্যে আরও অনেক ছোট নদী ছিল। এই সমস্ত নদীগুলি প্রায়

মরে গিয়েছে। আর মাঝখানে ছোট ছোট নদী গুলিও একেবারে শুকিয়ে গিয়েছে। কোন কোনটায় সামান্য সামান্য জল বর্ষায় হয়, আর কতকগুলি প্রায় বারো মাসই শুকনা থাকে। এই অবস্থায় মৈমনসিং জেলায় জল পথ গুলি একেবারে বন্ধ হোয়ে গিয়েছে বোললেও অত্যুক্তি হয় না। তার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে স্থল পথেরও বিশেষ অভাব। বিশেষতঃ মৈমনসিংহ ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট বোর্ড বর্ত্তমান সময়ে দেউলিয়া অবস্থায় পেঁৗচেছে। এই ডিষ্ট্রীক্ট বোর্ডের বর্ত্তমানে ১১ লক্ষ টাকা ঋণ হোয়েছে; বোর্ডের মোট আয় ১৪ লক্ষ টাকা, দেখা যায়, ঋণ বাদে বোর্ডের হাতে আছে মাত্র তিন লক্ষ টাকা। এরপর আর জনসাধারণের জন্য কোন রকম সুবিধা করবার তাদের ক্ষমতা আছে বোলে আমি স্বীকার করি না, যেহেতু এই তিন লক্ষ টাকা চলে যাবে অফিস খরচ ও কর্ম্মচারীদের মাহিনায়, বাকী ১১ লক্ষ টাকা যাবে ঋণ পরিশোধের জন্য। জনসাধারণের কাজ আর কোথা থেকে হবে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের তরফ থেকেও যদি কিছু আশা কোরতে না পারা যায়, জনসাধারণের আশা যদি পূরণ না হয় তাহলে এই গভর্ণমেণ্টের কি প্রয়োজন আছে সেটা আমি বুঝতে পারি না। এ সম্বন্ধে আমি আর বিশেষ কিছু বোলতে চাই না। আশাকরি যে মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয় এই দিকে বিশেষ ভাবে দৃষ্টি দিবেন এবং আমার বিশেষ অনুরোধ যে মৈমনসিংএর দিকে তাঁর একটু অতিরিক্ত দৃষ্টি পড়ুক। এই বোলে আমি আমার বক্তৃতা শেষ কর্‌ছি।

Mr. MANMATHA NATH ROY: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 1,55,71,000 under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

I find from the budget that the provision for new buildings not yet commenced is Rs. 28,20,953, whereas for new buildings in course of construction it is Rs. 18,94,900, and for repairs to buildings it is Rs. 24,29,000 (voted) and Rs. 4,04,000 (charged). It seems to me, Sir, that this is not the proper time to spend money on new buildings, and that the provision of about half a crore of rupees for new buildings has been responsible for increasing the deficit of the present budget substantially. I find that the Swan Committee of which you, Mr. Speaker, were a member, madè certain very salutary suggestions in this respect:—

"The expenditure of the Public Works Department fluctuates very widely. When the finances of the province are prosperous, large sums are allotted for new construction. When times are hard, the easiest and most obvious economy is to stop new construction and to cut down the grants for repairs."

That is exactly what I would ask the Government to do. Stop new works not yet commenced, and reduce the expenditure on new works which are in progress and repairs to buildings. I find from the Government figures that there is undue preference for buildings for the Government departments to the detriment of beneficent works of construction of roads and bridges. I also find that this preference is increasing from year to year. In 1939-40 there was a provision for

buildings to the extent of Rs. 49,09,665 and that for communication to the extent of Rs. 32,26,609. In 1940-41, the provision for buildings amounted to Rs. 51,87,500 and for communications Rs. 28,21,000 only, so that the expenditure under the head of communications was reduced that year. What do we find in the budget before us? Whereas the provision for buildings is Rs. 69,73,000, the provision that has been made for communications is the niggardly sum of only Rs. 23,63,000. The countryside needs better communications, and it is undeniable that the countryside has a greater claim on the provincial revenues than the scheme of palatial buildings in the city. It seems that there should be a definite policy for allocating the available funds between communications and buildings on a fair basis but not to the latter at the expense or to the prejudice of the former. Another feature I find from the figures is the tremendous delay, almost scandalous, in the execution of civil works. I find that in the original budget for this year the provision was Rs. 98 lakhs, whereas in the revised budget it is found that works to the extent of Rs. 12 lakhs out of the provision of 98 lakhs could not be executed. The reduction in the expenditure of the establishment has, however, been only Rs. 55,000. According to the revised estimate, the expenditure on the establishment exceeds 20 per cent. of the total expenditure. May I enquire from the Hon'ble Minister what is the maximum percentage which the Government is prepared to pay as expenditure on establishment? The failure of the department to utilise the budget provision is due to lack of initiative, lack of business instinct and lack of efficiency, either at the top or at the bottom or in the middle.

The last thing that I want to raise is the question of the provision of Rs. 8 lakhs for the acquisition of land near the High Court. I find that in 1937-38 the Government had made a provision for Rs. 3½ lakhs for the acquisition of land near the High Court, and we find the then Hon'ble Finance Minister, Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, saying this:—

"As regards the plot of land for which Government have provided Rs. 3½ lakhs, it has not yet been decided whether this will be required for an extension of the High Court. It may be required for providing accommodation for different Government offices, but how it will be utilised it has not yet been decided."

We find that in this budget a sum of Rs. 8 lakhs has been provided for the acquisition of land and we do not know if Government has yet decided which of the offices are to be located in the building to be constructed thereon——

The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: There are two different plots.

Mr. MANMATHA NATH ROY: There may be two different plots, but I do not know that, and the papers do not show that. In any case, it requires explanation. Both the plots are near the High Court. In the former case, we find that it is near the High Court and in the latter case there is a specific statement made by the Hon'ble the Finance Minister that it is near the High Court. Therefore, I cannot see any distinction between the two. And whereas Rs. 3½ lakhs was provided in 1937-38, Rs. 8 lakhs has been provided now. It strikes me as a wonderful miracle that the price has shot up from Rs. 3½ lakhs to Rs. 8 lakhs——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Perhaps due to brokerage.

Mr. MANMATHA NATH ROY: I submit, Sir, it requires a very careful enquiry and also some convincing explanation. But, Sir, I still maintain my point that it is a mistaken and wrong policy for Government to provide for any expenditure without determining what use is to be made of it. No decision could be made in 1937; no decision has been made now; and it is not expected that the Legislature will provide funds at the hands of Government for the purpose of speculation. It seems something like speculation, and I wish Government will give up the speculation.

(At this stage Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad rose to speak.)

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope, Khan Bahadur, you will try to be brief.

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I shall certainly try to cut short my speech, Sir, not only because I have the misfortune of coming up at the last moment, but also because, being a member of the Coalition Party which supports the Government, I think, we are guests here, and that we have to depend on the mercy of the other side of the House to participate in this debate. I want to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation and Civil Works the two facts which are uppermost in the minds of the public, namely, that so far as the Irrigation Department is concerned, it is regarded as a department which has no justification for its existence from the point of service to the province and masses, and that the Public Works Department is humorously termed as a Public Waste Department of the Government. Sir, the report on the working of the Irrigation Department even during this period of Provincial Autonomy does not show that matters have improved in the least. It does not convey that the department has justified even its existence so far as its services to the people are concerned. If you go back to the pre-Reform days,

you will find from reports as well as from public utterances of the then honourable members and official experts of the Irrigation Department that this department really existed for areas near about Calcutta, and, to mention only a few, there were the Damodar Canal project, the Grand Trunk Canal project, the Darakeswar project, the Madaripur Bil project, etc. And, Sir, lakhs and lakhs of rupees were wasted on the pet but imaginary theories of the then irrigation experts of Government. I do not want to go into the details of those schemes, because they are still fresh in the minds of honourable members. But in these days of Provincial Autonomy I find also that the Hon'ble Minister does not care a bit to distribute the money allotted for irrigation works throughout the province of Bengal, but that he has concentrated his attention to Darakeswar and Damodar Canal projects to solve the problem of irrigation and navigation in Western Bengal only. Of course, I must admit that the department has created a small staff for irrigation works in the district of Mymensingh. Although a friend of mine has complained that much has not been done for Mymensingh, I may tell him that Mymensingh is fortunate in at least now having an irrigation engineering staff of its own, when formerly there was only one in Khulna only for the entire province. The Hon'ble Minister has also promised to undertake a contour survey of Northern Bengal, and when he was asked about the irrigation and drainage projects for other parts of Bengal, he replied that he was examining the schemes submitted by the district boards, although we have not heard since then what he has done with those schemes. Then, Sir, we find that he has made an excess allotment in his budget of three lakhs of rupees for establishing a River Research Institute and other projects in 24-Parganas and Dacca. Sir, I think this is not the time for any academic study and research; this is the time when immediate action is called for. When you want irrigation works to be executed immediately at various places, the Department of Irrigation is thinking of the necessity of establishing a big laboratory for river research. When people are dying for scarcity of water, when entire tracts of land are becoming barren due to the silting up of rivers and water channels, they are just considering how best to study the various problems of irrigation and drainage and to carry on research in that field. When people are pressing for the dredging and opening out of *khals* and channels and are forwarding to Government a number of schemes, when every endeavour ought to have been made to put those schemes into operation, we only find that Government is making provision for theoretical study and research to find out the causes of the failure of our natural drainage and irrigation system. This has been the attitude, Sir, of the Irrigation Department of this Government even in these days of Provincial Autonomy. Of course, it does not suit me, being a supporter of Government, to criticise its activity in this way, but I have to do so with a full sense

of my responsibility, because, being a supporter of this Government, I am as much responsible for the failure of the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Irrigation to tackle irrigation problems as the Hon'ble Minister himself, because it is only on our support that the Ministers can function.

Now, Sir, I shall draw your attention to the position in the Chittagong Division. There, Sir, is a persistent demand for drainage and irrigation works, particularly in the Cox's Bazar subdivision where the Government functions in a dual capacity. In one capacity Government functions there as the landlord, and in another capacity it functions as a State. In its capacity as the landlord of the *khas mahal* lands, Government has not been able to induce the Irrigation Department to give effect to the schemes sent up by the local officials. There were several schemes that were sent up in recent years, but nothing has been done and no reply even has been given. I am in possession of letters which show that several irrigation schemes were sent up by the Khas Mahal Department for which only Rs. 6,000 was ultimately sanctioned, but could not be spent. I have given notice of a question in this session about annual floods in certain *khals* in the Cox's Bazar subdivision, but I have got no reply to it as yet. It relates to the Katakhali, Patili, Mitachari and Umkhali and Bagkhali Khals in the Cox's Bazar subdivision which are annually inundated, doing serious damage to the crops of several villages, with the result that Government revenues have decreased, and quite a large number of remission petitions are pending before the Khas Mahal Officer of Government. All these matters are now staring the Revenue Department in its face, but the Revenue Department has not been able to draw the attention of the Irrigation Department. The only reply that the Revenue authorities can give is, that they are consulting the Engineer at Mymensingh, and even if an advice is tendered by him money is not available. The Engineering Department says that this work should be taken up, but the authorities say that this is a big scheme costing about Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 which they are not in a position to finance. The Hon'ble Minister in his last year's Budget speech admitted that it was not possible for the district board to take up more responsibility in this respect, and so he was examining the drainage, excavation and embankment scheme in consultation with the local officers in different districts. This is a matter to which I want to draw the Hon'ble Minister's pointed attention, and I do it for this reason. I know that my words will go in vain. This is a performance of every year. Every year we criticise the budget on "General Administration" and other departments; every year the Hon'ble Minister will repeat the same argument. In preparing the budget, I think half of our suggestions are not accepted, either for want of attention or for want of funds. Sir, my friend Mr. Nalini

Ranjan Sarkar—I find he is not here now—had blamed the Coalition Party for obstructing the Cabinet in working according to definite programme and plan. But I can tell him—and he was a Minister himself—that we have got no hand in the preparation of the budget. As a matter of fact, the position is that we are not consulted and that we are not taken into confidence by the Minister. So, Sir, Mr. Sarkar's remark was not justified that in the policy formulated by the Government we have got any hand, so far as this budget is concerned. Has the Minister consulted the members in determining the priority of schemes, as to which schemes should be given preference? No, Sir, they have not. As you know, Sir, budget is a secret thing which cannot be divulged before actual presentation. But we support it because we have got confidence in the Ministers that they would do justice to all parts of the province without any undue preference to any section, and I hope that trust will be discharged by them creditably. I do not say that they have done any injustice consciously to other parts of Bengal, but I should say that attention has not been focussed on this, and there has not been forceful representation from that part of the province which I represent.

Next, I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister in charge to another point. Sir, in the reply to my question with regard to Aracan trunk road, he has made a mistake. I say, Sir, in 1931 the Aracan trunk road was classed as No. 1 on account of its position as an inter-provincial road. It was placed as Class 1 long before Mr. King came on the scene. Then he was merely an Assistant Engineer and his scheme came much later on. The Aracan trunk road was taken up by the Bengal Board under the direction of the Jayakar Road Development Committee of the India Government and was classed as Class 1 and money was allotted. But long after this the Minister gives the reply that it was not classed as No. 1. So, I submit, Sir, the reply to my question is not correct. It was sanctioned so far back as in 1931. But on account of the way in which the Public Works Department handled this case, this Aracan trunk road is still incomplete. They wanted to throw the burden first on the district board. The Public Works Department would not take it up, although they were requested by the district board to do so. Then the district board took up the matter and drew up a scheme with the help of their engineers and began to work. Thereafter the Public Works Department took it away and kept the work pending for two or three years in its hands and then again later on made it over to the district board. The district board have completed the work up to Rs. 5 lakhs, and there is no money left now. At present they are given the reply that the India Government have refused further money, so the work cannot be proceeded with. But I ask—Who is responsible for this? Certainly the Government is responsible on account of the lapse of the money

due to the difficulty created by the Public Works Department in completing the scheme long before. Other minor schemes which were accepted later on have been completed. May I ask why?

Sir, these are the points which I want to bring to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister in charge, and I hope that further injustice will not be done because of the distance of Chittagong district from the metropolis of Bengal where the Ministers reside.

The Hon'ble Maharaja SRISCHANDRA NANDY, of Cossimbazar: Sir, first of all I must assure my friend the Khan Bahadur, who spoke just before me, that we put the greatest amount of value to the discussion that takes place here during the budget. Every item discussed by different members of the House is examined by the department and action taken as far as practicable. Sir, I am sorry to find that even after what I have stated the members of the Opposition have not appreciated the very many disabilities under which this department is suffering for a long time and, in spite of our best efforts, we have only been able to touch the fringe of the problem.

Sir, there is no denying the fact that in every scheme somebody has to do the spade work without which no edifice can be built. Unfortunately in our case we had to begin from the spade work, but the progress we have made within this short period cannot be said to be insignificant. I am surprised to find that my friend Mr. Abul Fazl who was so keen about this river training institute last year now says that there is no need for it. Well, Sir, that is the difficulty with the Opposition. One year they will say that we have not done something and when we take it up, they will say that it is the wrong way to spend money.

Sir, I admit that as a result of the deterioration of the rivers and the spill channels, the health of the province has greatly deteriorated, and as I have already stated in my initial statement, the problem by accumulation has become all the more acute. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: And unmanageable.) Sir, as regards the River Institute, I need not go into details as I have already dealt with it. I hope when the Institute is a settled fact every one of us present here will appreciate its utility. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Surely.) Sir, Mr. Abul Fazl has also deprecated the formation of the River Commission as he thinks that will take time. Sir, if you do not have the River Commission to deal with the inter-provincial aspect of the river problem nor the River Training Institute to investigate into the scientific side of it, how can you hope to solve the river problem of Bengal? I admit that so far as the problems of Northern and Eastern Bengal are concerned they were not properly treated, and I had on more than one occasion stated before this House the reason for it. It was through the initiation of this Government that the attention of

this department was especially diverted towards that part of Bengal and in the expansion scheme we opened up a new division at Mymensingh and three new subdivisions at Comilla, Rangpur and Barisal. Much has been said about the neglect by this department of Tippera. May I tell my honourable friend Mr. Shahedali that ever since we assumed charge, we have been trying our best to solve this baffling problem of the Gumti flood. I had occasion to state before this House about the Escape scheme which was not found suitable. If personal visits, according to Mr. Atul Krishna Ghose, have any charm, I went to Tippera with the object of seeing if we could bring that scheme into operation, but, Sir, after I held a Conference with the local people and my experts there, it transpired that the scheme if given effect to would only be diverting the flood from one area to the other. Then we took up the Reservoir scheme. Unfortunately in that scheme the location of the reservoir had to be made within the Tippera State. I personally visited Tippera a second time to persuade His Highness the Maharaja of Tippera to agree to our scheme, but unfortunately there also we failed (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: One Maharaja disappointed another) and lastly we have undertaken a survey of that area in order to find out if we cannot demolish a portion of the embankment altogether. I can assure my friend that pending that enquiry, Government have undertaken to maintain that portion of the embankment which has been no-man's land for all these years.

I may also inform my friend Mr. Mafizuddin Ahmed that we have considered the question of improvement of several of the waterways in that district, viz., the Dakatia Khal, the Titash river and others. The Dakatia Khal is now in a shrunken state and its improvement is hydraulically not possible. Sir, the question of the improvement of the Titash river has also been considered very carefully. It is only an abandoned loop of the Megna river. As you are aware, Sir, the Megna river has a gradual slope. So it would never be possible to improve the Titash river unless something extraordinary happens in the increase of the discharge of the small hill-streams which join with that river.

I am surprised to find my old friend Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas raising certain propositions which I never expected him to do and I am sure which will be considered by the experts to be nothing short of absurdity. He has suggested that in order to reclaim more lands near the seaside, we should put up new embankments. That had been the shortsighted policy in the past which was responsible for the dying out of several rivers by cutting out their spill areas. We do not want to commit the same mistake again. He wanted to know whether in regard to our laboratory scheme we have consulted the Provincial Governments. May I assure him that we have not only consulted the Provincial Governments referred to by him, but we also

consulted Orissa and Assam. They have agreed to co-operate with us. We have been assured of every help by the Calcutta University and have also been assured of full co-operation from the Calcutta Corporation.

Sir, I do not quite understand the figures quoted by my friend Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas in which he showed that a very large sum was being spent on establishment for schemes costing a very small capital amount. I am afraid that in respect of irrigation you should not calculate the establishment from the capital cost of schemes because in irrigation the staff has to be maintained for the collection of data for some time before the project is ready for execution. If you want to excavate a canal, you must know the water level of that area. It may be that one year there is flood and in the second year there is drought. Thus we must have at least three years to collect data before we can formulate any scheme. All these years the staff has to be employed. But as the staff completes the collection of these data and we take up more schemes, the percentage of establishment will go down rapidly.

Mr. Shahedali has also referred to the remarks of the Public Accounts Committee. I may assure him that we have taken a very careful note of the suggestion of that committee, but, Sir, from what he has quoted, I would only point out that the remarks for 1939-40 are a reply to the remarks for 1938-39.

I am thankful to my friend Mr. Hirtzel for his constructive suggestion and his appreciation of the disabilities under which the department is suffering. Sir, much has been said that we have done nothing about North Bengal. As I have already stated that besides the comprehensive contour survey which we have taken up in right earnest, some small schemes have almost been completed. Besides, it is in North Bengal that we have to maintain and spend a large amount of money annually for the maintenance of embankments in Rajshahi and Sirajganj.

Sir, I will now come to the civil works side of the department. First of all, I would like to point out to Mr. Manmatha Nath Roy that the amount which has been provided in the budget this year for the construction of building has been done with utmost caution. We are aware of the increase in the price of building materials and while making the selection of building schemes, we selected only those which were essentially necessary and which could not wait any longer. I can assure my honourable friend that we shall further consider that question and if found possible to postpone any construction work we shall do so. But there is another side of that question. Government

have to spend a fairly large sum of money on hiring buildings for their courts, offices and quarters. Now when these buildings are constructed, there will be a saving on that score. As regards plots near the High Court, I am sorry to find that he has confused the two plots—one which we have already acquired last year with the one or to be more accurate the two plots we propose to acquire. Sir, it is not a fact that these plots are acquired by Government without coming to a definite decision as to how that should be utilised. But, Sir, there are things which it is not possible to make public before the matter is finally settled. That plot acquired last year was meant to centralise all the courts near the High Court. But subsequently the demand came from the High Court for land for the extension of their offices and we had to agree to it. The two new plots proposed to be acquired this year are meant for the extention of Government offices. There is no denying the fact that with the introduction of the new Reforms offices had to be expanded enormously. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Lengthening the tail of the Government?) A special committee was appointed for examining the accommodation which would be needed. They have gone into the question thoroughly and they have recommended the square space which would be necessary for the offices. We have prepared a rough plan and we believe that these two plots would serve our purpose to some extent. Sir, I admit that if we could have postponed acquisition of these plots till the prices of materials had gone down we might have been able to save the amount of interest we would have to pay in the meantime. But, Sir, in that case we may not have got these two plots. Of these two plots one belongs to the Imperial Bank and the other to the Government of India. These are for sale, and they will sell it to any party who comes forward to purchase it. It is for this reason that we have to incur this expenditure this year.

Sir, Mr. Morgan asked me about the proportion of the money, which we will receive from the Motor Spirit Sales Tax, to be paid for the existing schemes and for the new schemes. I may remind him that the Hon'ble the Finance Minister while moving for grant said that our idea is to utilise 50 per cent. of the amount in supplementing the schemes which we have already taken up from the petrol fund and 50 per cent. will be spent according to the amendment of my esteemed friend Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri on new roads. I have doubts as to how the expression "new roads" is going to be interpreted and whether the improvement of *kutcha* roads can be brought within the definition of new roads.

Sir, as regards the fitting of pneumatic tyres on the wheels of bullock-carts I know it is a very old question, but I am afraid, it will not be possible to come to an early decision on the matter. Owners of bullock-

carts are proverbially poor, and although I feel that if it were possible to fit all the bullock-cart wheels with pneumatic tyres the wear and tear of the roads could be greatly minimised.

My honourable friend Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad has referred to Chittagong-Arakan road. It is no use going into old history of bygone days. It is true that that road was taken up as a part of the first quinquennial programme in or about the year 1930, but for reasons well known to my friend the construction was delayed. The responsibility lay with the Government of India who having first approved of the scheme wanted to back out and withdraw the sanction in the interest of the Chittagong-Dohajari Railway construction of which was nearing completion. Anyhow, we are now proceeding with the construction of the bridges all right.

Lastly, Sir, I have one point which I forgot to mention. In reply to my friend Mr. Manmatha Nath Roy regarding the percentage of the establishment cost on the civil works side, I may say that the establishment last year was 15 per cent. and this year it has come down to 13 per cent.

I wish I could reply to other points raised during the debate, but as it is already late, I refrain from doing so.

With these words, Sir, I oppose all the cut motions and commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

The motion of Mr. Md. Abul Fazl that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Atul Krishna Ghose that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Babu Upendra Nath Barman that the demand of Rs. 32,13,000 for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation, etc." be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Maharaja Srischandra Nandy, of Cossimbazar, that a sum of Rs. 32,13,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "XVII—Irrigation—Working Expenses—18—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Ordinary Revenue—18(1)—Other Revenue Expenditure financed from Famine Relief Fund—19—Cons-

truction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works——Financed from Ordinary Revenues and 68—Construction of Irrigation, Navigation, Embankment and Drainage Works not charged to Revenues," was then put and agreed to.

The motion of Maulvi Abdul Wahed that the demand of Rs. 1,55,71,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Manmatha Nath Roy that the demand of Rs. 1,55,71,000 for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Maharaja Srischandra Nandy, of Cossimbazar, that a sum of Rs. 1,55,71,000 be granted for expenditure under the heads "50—Civil Works" and "81—Civil Works not charged to Revenue" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

It being 8-10 p.m.—

The House was adjourned till 4-45 p.m. on Friday, the 21st March, 1941, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Friday, the 21st March, 1941, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Sir MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 181 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Post of Assistant Superintendent, Bengal Government Press.

*179. **Maulvi WALIUR RAHMAN:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Finance Department aware that there is no Muslim gazetted officer in Bengal Government Press, Alipore?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the post of the Assistant Superintendent, Bengal Government Press, which was advertised in the newspapers, has since been filled up;

(*ii*) the number of applications received from—

(1) Hindus, and

(2) Muslims;

(*iii*) the number of candidates interviewed—

(1) Hindus, and

(2) Muslims; and

(*iv*) the name, age and qualification of the appointed candidate?

(*c*) If no one has been appointed to the post, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of filling up the post by a suitable Muslim candidate?

(*d*) If not, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

MINISTER in charge of the FINANCE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy): (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) (*i*) and (*iv*) The post has not been filled.

(*ii*) Hindus 28 and Muslims 6.

(*iii*) Hindus 8 and Muslims 4.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) Does not arise.

Relief works in certain districts of the Burdwan Division.

***180. Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing, subdivision by subdivision,—

(*a*) the percentage of crops grown in the district of Burdwan, Birbhum, Bankura and Midnapore this year; and

(*b*) the amount of—

(1) gratuitous relief, and

(2) agricultural loans

given to each district?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy): A statement is laid on the table.

Statement referred to in the reply to starred question No. 180.

Name of district.	Percentage of outturn of crops.	Amount sanctioned for distribution as—		
		*Ordinary agricultural loans.	*Short-term agricultural loans.	*Gratuitous relief.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Burdwan—				
Sadar ..	40	1,11,000	19,209	6,300
Kalna ..	38			
Katwa ..	39			
Asansol .	32			
Birbhum—				
Sadar ..	10	25,905	1,000	1,00,000
Rampurhat ..	15			
Bankura—				
Sadar ..	32	14,864	2,000	..
Vishnupur ..	50			
Midnapore—				
Sadar ..	83	1,67,300	38,124	37,000
Contai ..	67			
Tamluk ..	100			
Ghatal ..	75			
Jhargram ..	67			

*Allotments are sanctioned district by district and not subdivision by subdivision.

Mr. ADWAITA KUMAR MAJI: মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহাশয় অনুগ্রহ কোরে বলবেন কি, এই Tamluk Subdivisionএ যে বোলেছেন 100 per cent. outturn হোয়েছে, তিনি কি অবগত আছেন যে Tamluk Subdivisionএ অনাবৃষ্টি হওয়াতে ফসলের অনেক ক্ষতি হোয়েছে?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: না, হয় নি।

Theft cases in Senhati village in Khulna district.

***181. Mr. J. N. GUPTA:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Police) Department be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing for the years 1938, 1939 and 1940 with regard to the village of Senhati in the district of Khulna—

(*i*) the number of theft cases reported;

(*ii*) the number of cases that were detected; and

(*iii*) the number of cases that ended in conviction?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether police enquiries were made immediately after the report;

(*ii*) whether chowkidars and police regularly go out on night round; and

(*iii*) whether it is a fact that almost every night there is a theft in that village?

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. FAZLUL HUQ:

		1938.	1939.	1940.
(*a*) (*i*)	...	6	8	14
(*ii*)	...	1	2	3
(*iii*)	...	1	1	1

One case pending.

(*b*) (*i*) Yes, except in two cases of 1940, the investigations of which were refused.

(*ii*) Yes.

(*iii*) No.

Workmen of the Anglo-India Jute Mills at Jagatdal.

*182. **Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR:** (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Commerce and Labour Department aware—

(*i*) that there exists a feeling amongst old workmen of the Anglo-India Jute Mills at Jagatdal, on account of the withholding of the usual grant of gratuities to many applicants with long years of service; and

(*ii*) that in the course of last year nine aged workers with long period of service of the Anglo-India Upper Jute Mill applied for gratuity?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*ii*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the said applicants have been granted a gratuity?

(*c*) If the applicants have not been granted a gratuity, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons thereof?

(*d*) Do the Government propose to take any steps in the matter?

(*e*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether any old hands have been granted gratuity in the course of the year 1940?

(*f*) If the answer to (*e*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(1) the name,

(2) age, and

(3) period of service,

of the beneficiaries of such grant?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMERCE and LABOUR DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy): (*a*) (*i*) No.

(*ii*) Yes, it so appears from two unsigned petitions received by me in February last.

(*b*) The report of the Labour Commissioner to whom the petition has been referred for an enquiry is still awaited.

(*c*), (*d*) and (*f*) Do not arise.

(*e*) I have no information.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state how those two applications without names could reach the Hon'ble Minister?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: I do not understand.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your question?

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: He says that two unsigned petitions have been received.

Mr. SPEAKER: He does not say unaddressed; he only says unsigned.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: How could they reach the Hon'ble Minister? Did they go to the Labour Commissioner or did they go to him direct?

Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps they reached him directly.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: I want to know whether they were sent to him directly.

Mr. SPEAKER: You ask him.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether those petitions were addressed to him direct?

The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Is it the practice to entertain unsigned petitions by Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

42—Co-operation.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 17,30,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation."

Mr. SPEAKER: How long will you take?

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Ten minutes.

In presenting this demand to the House, I may be permitted at the outset to submit to the House the policy that we have adopted in this department with the ultimate object of making the movement really useful to those for whom it is meant. I have had occasion in the past to indicate that the policy of this department was definitely laid down to be one of consolidation and of expansion. So far as the policy of consolidation is concerned, I had an occasion also to mention last year about the steps that have been taken.

The House may be good enough to recall that I stated some time back that for a proper and efficient working of the department a few things were essentially needed, viz., that as the department was hopelessly understaffed, the staff ought to be enlarged in order that they might be able to deal with the growing demands and necessities. In the second place, as the staff had practically no training in the principles and practice of co-operation, especially with reference to rural life of our country, they should be given a training. Thirdly, the audit should be separated from general supervision and the audit report should be more expeditiously dealt with. I had an occasion to indicate to the House the steps that have been taken with regard to these various items, and I am now able to point out that the staff has been considerably enlarged and that the whole of the staff have been taken through training at the Training Institute at Dum-Dum where they were placed under a body of experienced officers of the department, some of whom had their training at Gurudaspur Training Institute in the Punjab. We also undertook the training of a large number of supervisors and Secretaries of the Central Banks. The audit, as mentioned last year, has been placed in charge of the Chief Auditor and the officers who are in charge of the audit under him have nothing to do with the general supervision.

I appreciated the debate that was raised over this question at the time when the Co-operative Societies Bill was under discussion in the House. I pointed out that we were concerned more with the audit of the Central Banks and of the large urban societies than of the thousands of village societies. In fact, the audit of the village societies is not a problem of the type as it is in regard to that of the Central Banks and the large urban societies. We have, therefore, to see how the system works before we are able to think of a change in the system.

I also indicated that the existing Co-operative Societies Act II of 1912 was no more sufficient to deal with the growing circumstances and that it needed an immediate amendment. The House will remember that it was pleased to consider the Bill and pass it in September, 1940, last. It also went through the other House and the amendments that the Legislative Council made had also been agreed to by this House. It is now awaiting assent and as soon as it is assented to and takes the shape of law, it will give proper power to deal with all sorts of derelictions and

the financing banks will have sufficient authority to deal successfully with their constituent societies and members. The House may be good enough also to recall that the year before last a heated debate was raised as to what should be done with regard to the existing liabilities and the future credit necessities of our rural members of primary societies. I indicated to the House the steps we proposed to take with regard to this very difficult and important subject. I divided it into two parts, one with regard to the past and the other with regard to the future.

With regard to the past I indicated that an enquiry was already undertaken to find out the assets and liabilities of the financing banks. On the results a scheme to scale down the debts of the primary society members to their paying capacity was also drawn up and the members were requested to have their individual assets and liabilities examined by the Debt Settlement Boards so that they might get all debts settled and awards made on that basis and the liabilities so awarded, spread over a number of years by instalments according to the paying capacity of each and every one of them. The past will have nothing to do with the future.

As regards the future, I also mentioned that Government intended to give full support to the co-operative movement and that if with this assurance the financing banks were not able to draw the active sympathy of the investing public, Government would consider the steps they could take to help the movement with direct financial assistance and in taking such steps to stimulate the provision of funds for short term agricultural credit, Government—I then mentioned—have in mind the requirements of cultivators for genuine seasonal agricultural needs and do not contemplate nor consider themselves in any way responsible for supply of credit for other extraneous objects such as expenditure on social ceremonies.

Pursuing this policy, Government came forward with a direct financial help to the tune of Rs. 13½ lakhs to the Provincial Co-operative Bank last year. The House will be pleased to learn that the whole of that money has come back. In the current year Government sanctioned a sum of Rs. 60 lakhs to be paid to the agriculturist members through the Provincial Bank. The whole of the money was not needed and that payment was in the neighbourhood of Rs. 50 lakhs. More than half of the amount has already been refunded and we hope that before the fixed time is over, the balance will also be paid back.

In the coming year there is a provision for Rs. 60 lakhs to be advanced in this way. I have already indicated that there is a growing demand for the expansion of the movement and while appreciating the same, we are not unmindful of the unsatisfactory experience due to quick expansion in the past. It is one of the severe lessons that we have learnt and that we sincerely hope that such mistaken steps will

not be repeated. The various committees and commissions which sat in the past have on the one hand recognised the suitability and importance of the co-operative societies for meeting the credit facilities on a short term basis of the rural people of our province, but on the other, they have also struck a note of warning, whereby they have suggested that this must be very cautiously done, and it must be on a sound basis as well. While talking of the credit facilities of the rural people, I hope I shall not be misunderstood if I were to say that the credit must be understood to be credit and not a charity and before one is able to ask for credit he has got to establish his creditworthiness. I may be excused if I repeat what I had said some time ago that I do not consider that cheap credit facility is always desirable. Credit facilities through co-operative institutions must always be for productive purposes.

Sir, I should not be justified to anticipate my honourable friends in regard to the subjects they seek to discuss through the various motions that have been tabled, but I do appreciate their anxiety about the future of this movement in this province, which they seek to suggest that some definite action to rehabilitate the movement must be immediately taken. I have indicated in the beginning that a scheme has been drawn up on the basis of the enquiry undertaken some time ago. The late Finance Minister of this Government, I mean Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, was good enough to examine the results in reference to some of the financing banks of Eastern Bengal. Before he was able to consider it in detail, he left Government and that the subject has to be examined afresh by my honourable colleague, the present Finance Minister. Since it is a question involving a very heavy amount of the investing public, it required a very serious consideration of experts as also of Government before they are able to make up their minds one way or the other. In fact, the experts have given us their views, but they have warned us that we should be very careful about our data. As I have said, I am no less anxious than my honourable friends to see that a definite decision is reached at an early date and that we are able to tell the investing public, the financing banks as also primary societies and their members as to where they stood in relation to one another.

Sir, I shall now briefly indicate some of the steps taken regarding expansion before I commend my motion to the House.

So far as the current year's crop loan societies are concerned, we have got now the membership of 120,000 in about 6,000 societies. Two new Central Banks have been started purely with crop loan societies, one at Nagarpore in the district of Mymensingh and the other at Chakhar in the district of Bakarganj.

To link up credit with marketing facilities with the object of securing a proper price for agricultural produce to the agriculturist members,

20 multi-purpose societies have been organised during the year. We have now altogether 30 such societies in the province with a total paid up capital of about Rs. 2 lakhs and the membership exceeding half a lakh.

A rice mill is under construction at Manmathapur in the district of Dinajpur with an annexure to a multi-purpose society. The idea is to convert members' paddy into rice and then sell it at greater advantage, so that the members will have greater margin of profit than what they would have got if only raw paddy was sold.

There are 73 sale and supply societies with 30,833 members with a total working capital of Rs. 80,50,000. The value of the total quantity purchased annually by these societies is about Rs. 4 lakhs. The total quantity of things supplied is valued at about Rs. 3,70,000. These societies carry on joint marketing and joint purchasing business for the benefit of the members eliminating intermediary agencies.

To supply credit on a long term basis and to enable rural members to consolidate their debts, five land mortgage banks have been functioning in the province for some time now. Five more land mortgage banks have been sanctioned, but their start is being delayed because of uncertainty of the money market due to war conditions, necessitating postponement of floating of contemplated debentures. The Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank is financing the existing five land mortgage banks and is not in a position to finance such banks any more. A proposal has been submitted to Government for providing loans for financing the new land mortgage banks and the same is under examination.

A number of peripatetic training parties, each consisting of one trained auditor and one trained supervisor, have been organised for training the secretaries of rural societies. The cost will be met out of the Government of India grant.

A Special Officer, who has a thorough knowledge of the working of the department for years and who was associated with the Co-operative Societies Bill in all its stages, has been appointed to frame rules under the Bill and the work has been taken up in right earnest. We hope that by the time the assent to the Bill is received, the rules will also be ready so that we may be able to put the same into operation without any further delay.

I do not think that I shall be justified in taking more time of the House at this stage. With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be

Sir, I move this cut motion with a view to raising a discussion about the policy followed by the Government of Bengal so far as the co-operative movement is concerned.

At the outset, I beg to submit that for the last four years the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Co-operation had delivered speeches at the beginning as an apalogia and that in meeting the criticisms towards the close of the debate he had held out hopes and assurances to the members of the Assembly, but in substance nothing has been done by him so far. This year, too, the same policy has been followed, and I believe towards the close of this debate he will again hold out hopes and assurances which will never be realised. The only thing to the credit or discredit of the Minister has been the enactment of last year by which what power had been vested in the members of societies has been taken away and vested with the Registrar. The effect of that will be that if the Registrar be not an able man or a man of character the power vested in him would be misused. The only consolation at the present moment is that we have a man as Registrar whom while he was an officer at Chandpur I knew very well. I have knowledge of his abilities and power of control, and I hope Mr. Aziz Ahmad will, by his integrity of purpose and strength of character, lead the co-operative movement to a successful termination——

Mr. NALINI RANJAN SARKER: Yes, to a successful termination!

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the co-operative movement in this province has been in existence for the last thirty years, and we have not seen any tangible economic betterment of the people; in a word, the co-operative movement has been a total failure. Sir, the aim and object of this movement was to do good to the people of this province, especially the agriculturists, but what do we see at the present moment so far as this movement is concerned? The co-operative movement has all along been a money-lending business. It has forgotten its aim to do good to the people and has been ousting the other money-lending classes in Bengal and following the policy of Shylock in realising as much money as possible without caring to know what the position of the debtors is.

So far as the selection of officers is concerned, it has been a scadalous affair. Even people who are over-aged are taken in the Co-operative Department. Even people who have got no educational qualifications are appointed, and their educational qualifications are described as "read up to the Matriculation," "read up to the I.A.," and "read up to the B.A.," without showing what are their actual qualifications. As a result of this, Sir, the Co-operative Department has, in fact, been

manned with persons who have proved themselves to be a set of inefficient officers due to whose activities the movement is bound to be a failure.

Then, Sir, as regards corruption, it is well known to everybody that corruption is prevailing throughout the whole co-operative movement. We have raised objection after objection and question after question, and cases of corruption have been brought to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister on several occasions, but there has been no remedy. When we go to the mufassal, we hear complaints after complaints against Auditors and Inspectors and when we bring them to the notice of the Assistant Registrars, they are not prepared to believe them. Even when objections are placed before them, they pay no heed to them, but dismiss them saying that they are nonsense. This is, Sir, my personal experience.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: বলেছিল, বলেছিল, স্বীকার করেন কেন?

Mr. SHAHEDALI: I admit it for this reason alone that I have been able to bring it publicly to the notice of the Hon'ble Minister. I admit it for this reason alone, namely, that this will have some effect and the Minister in charge will take some steps to remedy the defect.

Then I beg to say one thing regarding constructive policy. I also spoke about this thing to His Excellency the Governor regarding the rate and amount of interest realised by the Co-operative Department. There have been provisions in the Money-lenders Act that double the principal can be realised from the debtor, but in the Co-operative Department they can realise as much interest as they like. There is no limit of interest and there is no limit of amount. Even if the debtor pays twice, thrice or four times the principal, still interest is due from him and he is bound to pay. I want to impress upon the Hon'ble Minister that there should be some limit to this effect, namely, that the interest should either be equal to the principal or double the principal or 2½ times the principal and not more than that. Unless there is a limit, the Co-operative Inspectors and Auditors and the other directors of the bank will realise the amount to the full extent and the debtor shall not get any remedy.

Then, Sir, as regards the interest, the Provincial Bank had borrowed money from the depositors and the people had deposited the money at a certain percentage of interest, but they are realising from the debtor at a much higher rate of interest to the detriment of the interests of the debtor, and this also should be taken notice of. In no case more than 2 per cent. of the interest to be paid to the depositors should be realised from the debtor as interest.

Then, Sir, I want to impress upon the Hon'ble Minister one particular fact regarding the Chandpur Central Bank. Under the Chandpur Central Bank there is another bank, namely, the Matlab Central Bank. The Matlab Central Bank was originally under the Chandpur Central Bank. At that time the rural banks of Matlab were under the Chandpur Central Bank. At the time of separation, the principal and interest were taken into account so far as the Matlab Central Bank is concerned, and as a result the Matlab Central Bank cannot pay the full amount. I want to impress upon the Hon'ble Minister that so far as the Matlab Central Bank is concerned there should be remission of interest, and that interest should run on the principal amount alone. There is another fact, Sir, which is not less scandalous. There are some members in this Assembly who are also the Secretaries of certain Central Banks. Here they are getting money as daily allowances and travelling allowances. Still they are realising money from the Central Banks as their salaries. I want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to this aspect, and I want the Hon'ble Minister and the Registrar to take special notice of the Laksham Central Bank. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

Mr. SATYA PRIYA BANERJI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

The purpose of my motion is to raise a discussion about the failure of the Government to enquire into the condition of the co-operative movement, the working of the Co-operative Department from 1933—1940 with a view to formulate a scheme of rehabilitation and the appointment of a Special Officer in the Co-operative Department.

Sir, it has been my unfortunate lot to criticise the activities of the Co-operative Department for the last four years, "to bury Caesar, not to praise him," and I am happy that in so doing I rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's. But the Caesar of whom I am speaking just now is a hydra-headed monster; having been killed as the Registrar, we find him resurrected into life again as a Special Officer in the Co-operative Department and a bird whispers in my ears that even when he will be killed as the Special Officer, provision has already been made by the Board of Directors of the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank, the Chairman of which I am sadly missing to-day, that he will be appointed as the Financial Adviser of that Bank. The nerve centre of the co-operative movement will then as a result of this resolution be in the hand of one who as Registrar sat as a nightmare on the breast of the co-operative movement for the last long eight years, and had stifled it out of breath and almost killed it. And, Sir, he has at his command even now a set of creatures on the Board of Directors whom I can no better characterise than as the vampires who have sucked out of the

movement its lifeblood. I am referring to these things, Sir, because I feel and I am supported in this by the results of the last few years that unless and until the malign and sinister influence in any shape or form of these vampires and this nightmare be removed, and new blood infused into the movement there is no hope or any chance of rehabilitation of the co-operative movement.

Sir, I had in the past had occasions to read out portions of some documents which went to show clearly the ex-Registrar in his true colour. To-day I will only read out few lines from letters which have been addressed to me personally and which will go to confirm, if any confirmation is necessary, the above. One letter reads thus:—

"Having come to learn that you are taking keen interest in rooting out corruption in the Co-operative Department of Bengal, I supply you with the following facts in the public interest which I hope you will be able to use for your purpose.

The following cheques were received by me from Mr. So and so, a subordinate of the ex-Registrar, on account of my dues for the works done at the premises of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal, at P. 181, New Park Street, Calcutta. The cheques were paid by one of his subordinates from his personal bank account on various dates at the request of the Khan Bahadur to Mr. So and so, his subordinate. The cheques number thus—

	Rs.
No. 158064, dated 26th November, 1936, on the Bank of Commerce, College Street ...	50
By cash ...	100
Cheque No. 16036, dated 10th July, 1937, on the Bank of Commerce, College Street ...	100
(This cheque was once dishonoured on 13th July, 1937, as full cover was not arranged for on date and finally honoured.)	
Cheque No. 32791, dated 18th March, 1938, on Central Calcutta Bank, 3, Hare Street, Calcutta ...	50"

Another letter reads thus—

"I received a cheque of Rs. 35 on the Imperial Bank of Calcutta drawn by Babu So and so, the very same gentleman, in my favour, and I cashed it on the next day. I received this amount for my remuneration in supervising the construction of the house of Khan Bahadur A. M. Arshad Ali, Registrar, Co-operative Societies, situated at New

Park Street. In this connection Mr. So and so paid me several sums of money also by cheques whose details I do not remember at this distant date."

May I ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge was it fair and proper on the part of the ex-Registrar to ask his subordinate to make payments? Was it not against the conduct rules for the guidance of Government officers?

I need not take up the time of the House by reading these letters and raking up the memories of the unpleasant past. But, Sir, I could not help it for the present is the breath of the past and we should have a clear knowledge of the man who guided or rather misguided the movement during the last eight years before we can assess the present at its proper value. What do we find? The co-operative movement is practically at a standstill. The depositors are not getting their money back. Owing to the operation of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act and the Money-lenders Act sources of credit have been dried up. Unfortunately, communalism and party politics have been mixed up with the activities of the co-operative movement. Lastly, Sir, the hopeless and helpless condition of the Bengal Provincial Co-operative Bank, a condition which has been brought about by the inefficient ex-Registrar and his servile Board of Directors and which must be an eye-opener to all those who are interested in the welfare of the co-operative movement. At the present time a regular tug-of-war is going on between the present Board of Directors and the present Registrar, who, I am glad to be able to tell you, with a very strong hand is trying to stamp out nepotism and corruption from the department and cleanse its augean stables. He is trying with a very strong hand to place the movement on a sound footing so far as the department is concerned. But I will not anticipate the judgment regarding the present Registrar. I will keep my judgment in reserve for the present; for he will, I hope, be given sufficient time to show his merit and to make the movement stand on proper foundation. What have been the causes of the state of degradation and deterioration of the co-operative movement? Let me one by one place before you the causes. The first and the foremost is the defective and hasty organisation. You know perhaps that in the last year as many as 7,000 societies have been established for the purpose of distributing short term crop loan. I ask the Hon'ble the Minister in charge: Was any attempt made on behalf of the department to teach the members the fundamental principles of co-operation, the fundamentals on which the well-being and success of a co-operative society depend? Secondly, over-finance; thirdly, want of proper audit; fourthly, inefficiency, nepotism and corruption in the department. As my friend Mr. Shahedali says, the only qualification that entitles one to secure promotion is want of proper qualification and the abundance of the quality of sychophancy; fifthly, failure of the movement to deal

with all the economic aspects of the "whole man"; sixthly, the want of education of the members in co-operative principles; and, lastly, centralisation of all powers in the hands of the Registrar.

May I, Sir, at this moment refer you to a very interesting document—a decument behind which we see the Roman hand of the ex-Registrar, who is now struggling hard to champion the interests of the non-officials, after having failed to secure after frantic efforts a further extension of service. The document says:—"At any rate the present state of affairs is intolerable and carries with it a calumny of indifference and inactivity on the part of the co-operative organisation. It must be fully realised that the co-operative movement is an out-and-out non-official movement. If it is worth the name, it must be run by non-officials and financed by public money." Why this confession, Sir, on the penultimate day of his service? Could he not realise it before? Had he realised it in time, then the Co-operative Societies Bill which was designed to place all powers in the hands of the Registrar would have been otherwise and the co-operative movement would have been entirely under non-official guidance and control. This interesting document is the report of the committee appointed by the Board of Directors of the Provincial Co-operative Bank in their meeting held on the 30th December to examine the financial position of the bank and suggest measures of improvement. The blue light is on, and I do not know how long I will live. Therefore I will try to place before you in a very short outline the scheme of rehabilitation. The rehabilitation of the co-operative movement means rehabilitation of the rural life of Bengal, for in the words of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, if co-operation fails, fails also the hope of rural Bengal. If that is so, I would ask the Hon'ble Minister in charge to take courage in both hands and to initiate a scheme of rehabilitation here and now. I was glad to hear from him that a committee of experts have been revising the data collected by the ex-Registrar. I do not know who these experts are. I do not know if these experts have the confidence of the public or if those experts are the nominees of the Government. I wish they also had the confidence of the public. In any rehabilitation scheme four parties are concerned, namely, the depositors, the debtor societies and its members, the creditors and the Government. All these interests have got to be looked into and an equitable adjustment, if it is at all possible, made between them. How far without any avoidable risk to the tax-payer of Bengal can the Government come to the help, so that the movement can again begin to function? The first step in the rehabilitation of the movement is the restoration of public confidence in it, and the first step in the restoration of the confidence in the movement will be the satisfaction of the claims of the depositors who have staked their all in this movement. They did it because they thought, and rightly thought, that the Government was behind it and that their money was safe. But now at long last they find that Government is not looking to

them. Government is not looking also to the interest of the movement. The Government is sitting idle. Therefore my earnest appeal to the Minister in charge is to immediately set up a committee of experts which will go into the details which have brought about the present condition of the movement, a committee which will ascertain the utmost extent to which the claims of the depositors and other creditors may be met by enquiring into the repaying capacity of the debtors, a committee which will suggest how the supply of agricultural credit may be linked up with the other economic needs of the people, viz., increase of productivity, provision of marketing facilities and consumers' stores, etc., to enable the people to increase their earning and their repaying capacity and last but not least which will chalk out a comprehensive and effective ten-year plan to "co-operationise", if I may coin the expression, the whole province. I may in this connection only read out one sentence from the book of Dr. J. P. Neogi, Minto Professor of Economics. He says in his preface: "The time has come when the position should be reviewed once more by an expert committee and the main lines of future development authoritatively laid down." We have been repeating our claim incessantly, persistently, consistently and insistently but to our utter regret all our demands have fallen on deaf ears. Once more I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge to remember that, had the Government been earnest, had they really pushed on the movement and not played with it, I am sure the movement which is at a standstill now would have gone a great way in its onward march and in the language of Sir Daniel Hamilton a peasant or a worker though a small man by himself multiplied by 50 millions would have been on the way to organise their credit and to capitalise their labour till he became a giant able to move the whole world. With these words, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Maulvi IDRIS AHMED MIA : মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, বাংলার বিখ্যাত কবি কয়েক বৎসর আগে বোলে গিয়েছেন যে বাংলাদেশ ধন ধান্য এবং ফুলে ভরা ছিল। আজ কয়েক বৎসর পরে দেখ্ছি তার অল্পই আছে। মহাজনদের অত্যাচারে বাংলার যে অবস্থা হোয়েছে তা বর্ণনা করা যায় না। কিছুদিন আগে যখন মহাজনী আইন এই পরিষদে রচনা হোতেছিল তখন আমরা বোলেছিলাম Central Co-operative Bank গুলিকে আইনের দ্বারা নিয়ন্ত্রণ কোরতে। তখন মন্ত্রী মহোদয় বোলেছিলেন বাংলার প্রজাকে বাঁচাবার ভার আমরা নেব। পরে আমাদের মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয় যে ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন তা অতি উত্তম। প্রথমে কোরেছেন কি Central Co-operative Bank গুলির কর্ম্মকর্ত্তাদের উপর গরীব কৃষকদের ঋণ সালিসের ব্যবস্থা করবার ভার দিয়াছেন। এ ঠিক যেন বাঘের মাথায় মাংসের ডালি রেখে ছাগলের দলকে বলা ওর পাছে পাছে যাও হিসাব কোরে বিচার কোরে তোমাদের যা পাওনা তা বুঝিয়ে দেবে। ইহুদি মহাজন সাইলোকের অত্যাচার কাহিনী পড়ে আমরা বলি হায়, হায় কি অত্যাচার, কিন্তু আজ সাইলোকের সত্যিকার জাত ভায়েরা অন্য কোন যায়গায় স্থান না পেয়ে বাংলাদেশে রাজত্ব চালাচ্ছে। অথচ আমরা তা দেখেও দেখছি না।

কিছুদিন আগে হয়ত একথা নিয়ে খুব আন্দোলন কোরতাম বোলতাম "হায়, হায় বাংলার প্রজা গেল"। কিন্তু আজ বাংলার প্রজার শাসন ভার যখন আমাদের হাতে তখন তাদের উপর কি জুলুম অত্যাচার হোচ্ছে তাকি আমরা ভেবে দেখছি? একটা কেবল নমুনা দিতে চাই Co-operative Central Bank কি ভাবে অত্যাচার কোরে থাকে। কয়েকদিন আগে আমি আমার এলাকা মালদহের নাচোল থানায় গিয়াছিলাম। সেখানে দেখলাম দরবেল পুরের সলিম্ মিজর্জা নামে একটী লোক ৬০০৲ টাকা ধার নিয়েছিলেন। সেই ৬০০৲ টাকার পরিবর্ত্তে সুদে আসলে ১২২৪৸৫ দেওয়ার পরও নবাবগঞ্জ সেণ্ট্রাল কো-অপারেটিভ ব্যাঙ্ক তার উপর আরও ১২৩০৲ টাকা দাবী কোরেছেন। আর এই দাবী নিষ্পত্তির ভার ব্যাঙ্কের খাস গোলাম অর্থাৎ কর্ম্মকর্ত্তা ও তারই ধামাধরা দু-একজন লোক গঠিত স্পেশাল্ বোর্ডের উপর দেওয়া হোয়েছে। তারজন্য তার কাছ থেকে ২৫৲ টাকা ৫ আনার কোর্টফি জোর কোরে আদায় করা হোয়েছে। কি চমৎকার ব্যবস্থা। ডবল টাকা আদায়ের পরও যারা দাবী করেন সুদের সুদ তার সুদ ধরিয়া আরও ১২৩০৲ টাকা বিচার করবার ভার দেওয়া হোয়েছে Central Co-perative Bank এর সেই জুলুমবাজ Executive Officer দের উপর। হায় হায়, প্রজার উপর কি মায়া মমতা! মালদহ জেলায় তিনটি সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্ক আছে। সর্ব্বত্রই এই ব্যবস্থা। এমন popular Government এর এমন popular মন্ত্রী মণ্ডলীর এমন unpopular কাজ! এর চাইতে অন্যায় আর কি হোতে পারে।

আর একটী কথা আমি মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়কে বোলতে চাই আমরা যখন Co-operative Credit Bank গুলিকে মহাজনী আইনের আওতায় আনতে চেয়েছিলাম তখন তিনি বাধা দিয়েছিলেন। কয়েকদিন আগে আমি তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরেছিলাম যদি আপনি কিছুই কোরতে না পার্ব্বেন তবে এভার নিয়েছিলেন কেন? তিনি উত্তরে বলেছিলেন Co-operative আইন এখনও পাশ হয় নাই, কিছুদিন পরে পাশ হইলে বিশেষ ব্যবস্থা হবে। কিন্তু, যদি তিনি সেই আইনের আগে গরীবকে রক্ষার ব্যবস্থাটা কোরতে নাই পারবেন তবে তিনি কেন বাংলার দেনার দায়ে মরমর প্রজাকে সুদখোর মহাজনদের হাতে ছেড়ে দিলেন? মহাজনী আইনের মধ্যে সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্কগুলিকে ভুক্তি কোরে, পরে যখন ইচ্ছা সুবিধামত রেহাই দিতে পারতেন ত।

মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি কিছুদিন আগে আপনাকে অনুরোধ কোরেছিলাম "Man before the plough" নামে একখানি বই লিখতে, কেননা একদল লোক আজ চাষীর লাঙ্গলের আগে দাঁড়িয়ে দেশের সর্ব্বনাশ কোরছেন। আশা করি তাতে শেষের দিকে একটা Chapter যোগ কোরে দেবেন "Modern Slylocks, the Central Co-operative Credit Bank of Bengal" মহাজনী আইনে নিয়ম করা হোয়েছে যে কোন অবস্থাতেই আসল টাকার ডবলের বেশী আদায় করা যাবে না, কিন্তু Co-operative Credit Bank গুলি তিন, চার, পাঁচগুণ টাকাও আদায় কোরতে পারে, কোরেছে এবং এখনও কোরতে চেষ্টা কোরছে। আমার জিলায় এইরূপ তিনটি Bank আছে। এদের অত্যাচার অনাচার ও অবিচারের কথা বিবেচনা কোরলে স্তম্ভিত হোতে হয়। কিন্তু আমাদের popular Government এই বোলে কেবল চাষীদের সান্ত্বনা

দেন যে "আমাদের অধীনেই ব্যাঙ্ক, সুতরাং তোমাদের উপকার কোরবই"। কিন্তু আসলে করা হোচ্ছে কি? আধরাইল ব্যাঙ্কের বরকতুল্লা ১৫৮৲ টাকা লইয়া ৩৩২৸৶ দিয়াছে। তবুও এখনও দাবী ৫১৲ টাকা। দুলাহার গ্রামের নিধনী মণ্ডল ১৯৯৲ টাকা লইয়া ৪৩৫৶৫ দিয়াছিল বলিয়া নাচোল ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ড তাহাকে দেনা হইতে মুক্তি দেন, কিন্তু নবাবগঞ্জ সেণ্ট্রাল কোঃ ব্যাঙ্ক তাহা না মানিয়া আরও ১৫০৲ টাকা দাবী করিতেছে। ঐ দুলাহার যৌথ ব্যাঙ্ক ২৫৬৫৲ টাকার পরিবর্ত্তে ৪৯৭৪৲ টাকা দিয়াছে, কিন্তু, সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্ক এখনও চায় ৯২৭/৫। অথচ ঐ ব্যাঙ্কের মেম্বরদের আমানত শিয়ার রিজার্ভ ফণ্ড ইত্যাদি বাবদ ৭০৯৸ টাকা সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্কে জমা আছে। মালদহ সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্কের অধীনস্থ মোহনপুর ব্যাঙ্ক ২৫০০ টাকা লইয়া ৫১১৪৲ টাকা দিয়াছে। শিয়ার রিজার্ভ ফাণ্ড ইত্যাদি বাবদ প্রায় ৫০০ টাকা জমাও আছে। অথচ দেনা হইতে অব্যাহতি পায় নাই। কাজিনগর ব্যাঙ্ক ২৮৯০ টাকা লইয়া ৫৮১০/১০ দিয়াছে। শিয়ার রিজার্ভ ফণ্ড প্রভৃতি বাবদ অনুমানিক ৭০০৲ টাকা মালদহ সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্কের কাছে জমা আছে, কিন্তু এখনও দেনা হইতে অব্যাহতি নাই। মালদহ সেণ্ট্রাল কো-অপারেটিভ ব্যাঙ্কের সেক্রেটারী বাবু কালি প্রসন্ন সাহা, বি, এল চৌকা বোনবুন ব্যাঙ্কের সঙ্গে আমার মধ্যস্থতায় কথাবার্ত্তা করিয়া লিখিত হুকুম দ্বারা টাকা মিটাইয়া লন। তারপর ও জানিয়াছি ঐ ব্যাঙ্কের কর্ম্মকর্ত্তা সুপারভাইজার প্রভৃতি কর্ত্তরা আরও টাকা আদায় হইতে পারে কিনা তাহার চেষ্টা করেন। এর মানে কোন সেণ্ট্রাল ব্যাঙ্কর সেক্রেটারি গরীবদের প্রতি সুবিবেচনা করিতে রাজি হইলেও গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিযুক্ত ব্যাঙ্কের কর্ম্মচারীরা তাহাতে বাধা দেন। হতভাগ্য দেশের আজ দুর্ভাগ্য যে এই সব নরপিশাচের দল গরীব চাষীদের রক্ত এইভাবে চুষিয়া খাইয়া এখনও জেলের বাহিরে আছে। আজ আমি মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের কাছে এই সব জুলুমের একটা কৈফিয়ত চাই। আশা করি তিনি সে কৈফিয়ত দিবেন। বাংলার নিপীড়িত, অত্যাচারিত প্রজাদের উপর জুলুম করবার অধিকার এই Co-operative Credit Bank গুলিকে তিনি আর কতদিন দিবেন? অনেকদিন হয়ত এ অত্যাচার চোলবে না, কিন্তু ইতিমধ্যেই ঠগ্ ডাকাতের আডডার মত এই ব্যাঙ্ক গুলির অত্যাচারে বাংলাদেশের অনেক গ্রামই deserted village এ পরিণত হোয়েছে। ইংলণ্ডের গরীব দরদী কবি প্রায় দেড়শত বৎসর আগে ঐ দেশের গরীব চাষীদেরও গ্রামের দুরবস্থার কথা বোলে গিয়েছেন। আজ আমি এই দরদহীন মন্ত্রী মহোদয়কে বোলছি, (দরদপূর্ণ মন্ত্রী মহোদয় বোলতে রাজি আছি, যদি কৃষকদের দুঃখ এবং দারিদ্র্য দূর করেন) আজ তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরছি, বাংলার প্রজাদের বাঁচবার কোন অধিকার আছে কিনা!

আজ এদেশে Provincial Autonomy হোয়েছে। আমরা আমাদের নিজের দেশ শাসন কোরছি। নিজেরা আত্মনিয়ন্ত্রনের কথা বোলছি, কিন্তু, কাজের বেলায় দু-চারজনকে চাকরি দিয়ে আর সারা বাংলার কোটী কোটী লোককে নির্য্যাতন, জুলুম সহ্য করতে দিচ্ছি। এরই নাম কি হোচ্ছে বাংলার দায়িত্বপূর্ণ গভর্ণমেণ্ট।

মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়কে আর একটা কথা জিজ্ঞাসা কোরব। তিনি ব্যাঙ্কের কর্ম্মকর্ত্তা ইত্যাদিগকে লইয়া গঠিত ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ডের ভিতর দিয়ে দেনা নিয়ন্ত্রণ করবার ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন। এ ব্যবস্থা অতি উত্তম, এমন ব্যবস্থা পৃথিবীতে আর খুঁজে পাওয়া

যায় না। যাদের হাতে পড়ে তাদের জীবন, মরণের পথে বহদূর এগিয়ে গিয়েছে তাদের হাতেই বিচারের ভার দেওয়া হোয়েছে। এ যেন বাঘের হাতে ছাগলের জীবন মরণের বিচারের ভার দেওয়ার মত। আজ শুধু বাংলাদেশেই এই রকম বিচার দেখছি। কিন্তু, বোলে দিচ্ছি বাংলাদেশে এ অবিচার আর বেশীদিন থাকবে না। বাংলার প্রজা তারা বুঝতে পেরেছে হয় তারা ভাল ভাবে বাঁচবে না হয় তারা মরবে।

Maulvi ABDUR RAZZAK: সভাপতি মহোদয়, আমি Co-operative Bankএর পুরাতন দেনা সম্বন্ধে কিছু বলিতে দণ্ডায়মান হইয়াছি। বাংলা সরকার ঋণ-জালে জড়িত কৃষক সম্প্রদায়কে ঋণ মুক্ত করিবার উদ্দেশ্যে চাষী-খাতক আইন ও মহাজনী আইন পাশ করিয়াছেন, কিন্তু তা সত্বেও হতভাগ্য কৃষকগণের ঋণ হইতে মুক্তি পাইবার সম্ভাবনা দেখা যাইতেছে না। বহু সংখ্যক কৃষক Co-operative সংক্রান্ত দেনায় আবদ্ধ থাকায় ঐ আইনের উপকারিতা হইতে বঞ্চিত হইয়াছেন। কারণ সরকার বাহাদুর Co-operative সংক্রান্ত দেনাকে ঐ আইনের আওতার বাহিরে রাখিয়াছেন। দেনদারগণ পুরাতন দেনার দায়ে অন্যায় ভাবে নির্য্যাতিত হইতেছে। Co-operative Department নিজস্ব কর্ম্মচারী ও কয়েকজন মহাজন প্রতিনিধির দ্বারা Special Board গঠন করিয়া চাষীখাতক আইনের মর্য্যাদা ক্ষুন্ন করিয়াছে। কারণ এই Special Boardএ খাতকদের তরফ হইতে কোন প্রতিনিধি রাখার ব্যবস্থা হয় নাই। খাতকগণের সমস্ত মোকদ্দমা ঋণ-সালিসী বোর্ড হইতে অত্র বোর্ডের আওতায় আনায় খাতকগণের ভীষণ অসুবিধার সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে। বিচারপতিগণ খামখেয়ালীভাবে Bankএর ষোল আনা স্বার্থ বজায় রাখিবার চেষ্টা করেন। মীমাংসা কালীন বকেয়া সম্পর্ক সুদ ও আসল এবং অগ্রিম ৯।৵০ হারে সুদ হিসাব করিয়া দুই চার বৎসরের কিস্তি দিয়া থাকেন। Paying capacityর কোন কথাই উঠায় না, খাতকগণ অপারক বলিয়া আপত্তি করিলে জোর জবরদস্তিক্রমে ধমকাইয়া নথিতে দস্তখত করিতে বলে অন্যথায় সুদ ও অডিট্ ফিস্ আদায়ের উপলক্ষ করিয়া তাহাদের মাল ক্রোক ও নানাবিধ উপায়ে অত্যাচার আরম্ভ করে। খাতকগণ নিরুপায় হইয়া দস্তখত করিতে বাধ্য হয়,—তাহার প্রমাণস্বরূপ আমাদের ফেণী সেণ্ট্রাল Bankএর দুই একটী ঘটনা পরিষদে উপস্থিত করিতেছি। ফেণী ব্যাঙ্কের অন্তর্গত সোণাপুর সমিতির চাঁদুমিঞা নামক জনৈক মেম্বারের বাড়ীতে সার্টিফিকেট যোগে অডিট্ ফিস আদায় করিতে যাইয়া তাহার ধান, চাউল, গরু, বাছুর প্রভৃতি ক্রোক করিয়া অমানুষিক অত্যাচার করার ফলে তাহার গরুর একটী বাছুর মারাপড়ে। আমি স্বয়ং মাননীয় মিনিষ্টার ও রেজিষ্ট্রার মহোদয়গণের গোচরিভূত করাতে তাঁরা উত্তর করিলেন, আমাদের কোন ক্ষমতা নাই, আপনি কোর্টে বিচার প্রার্থি হইতে পারেন। যখন ঐ ব্যক্তি কোর্টে মোকদ্দমা দায়ের করে তখন তাহার বিরুদ্ধে ৩৫ ধারা অনুযায়ী Bankএর ক্ষতিসাধন করিয়াছে বলিয়া ডিপার্টমেণ্ট হইতে ৪০৲ টাকা জরিমানা করাইয়া পুনরায় তাহার বাড়ীতে মালপত্র ক্রোক করিয়া ভীষণভাবে অত্যাচার করে। Bankএর কর্ম্মচারীর অত্যাচারের ভয়ে প্রমাণ অভাবে মোকদ্দমার ফল পাওয়া গেল না। সেই ৪০৲ টাকা তাহার জমিন বিক্রয় করিয়া আদায় করিতে হইল। ফেণী সেণ্ট্রাল Bankএর এলাকাধীন উত্তর ননদীয়া গাঁ সমিতির আর একটী

ঘটনা আপনাদের সম্মুখে উপস্থিত করিতেছি। ঐ সমিতির জনৈক মেম্বারের সুদের কিছু অংশ মাফ দিয়া ৩১৲ টাকা সুদ, ১২৯৲ টাকা আসল, মোট ১৬০৲ টাকায় দেনা মিটান হয়। সে তাহার চাষের কিছু জমিন বিক্রয় করিয়া ১৫০৲ টাকা সেক্রেটারীর মারফতে চালান দ্বারা Central Bankএ ইং ২১।৩।৪০ তারিখে জমা দেয়, কর্ম্মচারীগণ সমিতির কজের্জর পাশ বইতে—১২৯৲ টাকা আসল ২১৲ টাকা সুদ বাবদ লিখিয়া চাল্লান সহ ফেরত দেয়। সেক্রেটারী বাড়ী যাইয়া সেইরূপ সমিতির বইতে জমা খরচ করে, পুনরায় যখন বাকী ১০৲ টাকা আদায়ের ৫৲ টাকা ইং ৪।৬।৪০ তারিখে জমা দিতে গেল, ব্যাঙ্কের কর্ম্মচারীগণ কজের্জর পাশ বই কাটীয়া আসল ২১৲ টাকা, সুদ বাবদ ১২৯৲ টাকা লিখিয়া পাশ বই ফেরৎ দেয়। ঐ ব্যক্তি স্থানীয় চেয়ারম্যান ও এসিস্টেণ্ট রেজিষ্ট্রার এবং ভূতপূর্ব্ব রেজিষ্ট্রার বাহাদুরের নিকট বহু আবেদন নিবেদন করা সত্বেও এযাবৎ তাহার কোন প্রতিকার পাওয়া যায় নাই। এই প্রকার প্রচুর ঘটনা রহিয়াছে যাহা বর্ণনা করিয়া শেষ করা যায় না। যদি সমিতির মেম্বারগণ এইরূপ ভাবে নির্য্যাতিত হোতে থাকে তবে Co-operative Society পরিচালিত করিয়া তাহার পিছনে লক্ষ লক্ষ টাকা খরচ করার কোন স্বার্থকতা আছে বলিয়া মনে করি না। আমি গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অনুরোধ করিতেছি গভর্ণমেণ্ট অতি সত্বর Co-operative Department ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ডের আমলে ফেলিয়া দিন, অন্যথায় ডিবেঞ্চার স্কীম issue করিয়া খাতকগণকে তাহাদের পুরাতন দেনা হইতে মুক্তি পাইবার রাস্তা প্রস্তুত করিয়া দিন। যদি গভর্ণমেণ্ট মনে করেন বকেয়া সম্যক সুদ মাপদিয়া আসল টাকা হইতে শতকরা ৩০৲ টাকা বাদ দিয়া বাকী টাকার ২০ বৎসরের কিস্তি ডিবেঞ্চার স্কীম্ issue করিলেও Rural Society হইতে টাকা আদায় হইবে না। এই Schemeএর liability গ্রহণ করিতে দুই বৎসর যাবৎ গভর্ণমেণ্ট ইতস্তত: করিতেছে। আবার এই বৎসর নূতন করিয়া অতিরিক্ত টাকা খরচ করা বুদ্ধিমানের কাজ বলিয়া মনে হয় না। গভর্ণমেণ্ট পুরাতন দেনা মিটাইয়া নূতন ভাবে Bank পরিচালিত করুন, অন্যথায় requisition করিয়া বন্ধ করিয়া দিন।

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMIK: বাংলাদেশে গত ৩৫ বৎসর ধরে সমবায় আন্দোলন চলেছে এবং Government ইহার জন্য প্রতি বৎসর বহু টাকা খরচ করিয়া আসিতেছেন, কিন্তু দুঃখের বিষয় দেশের বাস্তবিক কোন উপকার হয় নাই। Co-operative movement ছাড়া ভারতবর্ষের কোন উন্নতি সাধন হইতে পারে না। কারণ ভারতবর্ষ গরীব দেশ। শতকরা ৭০ জন কৃষক চাষের উপর নির্ভর করে, আর ১০ জন ব্যবসা বাণিজ্যের উপর নির্ভর করে। এখানকার শতকরা ৯০ জন লোক নিরক্ষর, কিন্তু এদেশে সব চেয়ে resourceful লোকদের আয় বাৎসরিক প্রত্যেকের ৫৭৲ টাকার বেশী নহে। Co-operative principle হোচ্ছে লোকের Better Production, Better Business, Better Terms এবং সকলকে এই movementএর ভিতর দিয়ে self-helpএ thrifty কোরে তোলা, কিন্তু এই যে Co-operative আন্দোলন চলেছে তার দ্বারা বিশেষ কিছুই হয় নাই। যে ভাবে Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Holland, United States

লোককে উন্নতির পথে নিয়ে গিয়েছে সেই ভাবে Co-operative movement পরিচালনা করা হয় নাই। কৃষকদের অবস্থা সব সময়ই খারাপ, তাহাদিগকে বরাবরই গ্রাম্য মহাজনদের উপর নির্ভর করিয়া চলিতে হয়। পূর্ব্বে এদেশে সুদের হার ছিল চাতকরা ৩৭॥০ টাকা এবং চক্রবৃদ্ধি হারে বৎসরে সুদ দিতে হইত, তাহার পর ১৯২৯ হইতে যখন Co-operative movement জোর চলিতে থাকে তখন লোকে ১৫৲ টাকা হারে সমবায় সমিতি হইতে টাকা কর্জ করিতে লাগিল এবং বাংলাদেশে প্রায় বিশ হাজার গ্রাম্য সমবায় সমিতি গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। তারপর যখন ১৯৩০ সালে সারা পৃথিবীব্যাপি Trade Depression চলে, উৎপন্ন জিনিষের দাম একেবারে কমে যায় কৃষকদের ঋণ প্রায় ২০০ কোটী টাকার উপর দাঁড়ায় তখন হইতে তাদের অবস্থা অত্যন্ত খারাপ হয়। তারা Co-operative Bank হইতে যে টাকা ধার করিয়াছিল তাহা যথাসময় দিতে পারে নাই। এবং গ্রামে যে সমস্ত unlimited liability Co-operative সমিতি গোড়ে উঠেছিল তারা যে টাকা ধার লইয়াছিল Central Bankএর নিকট হইতে সেই টাকা শোধ দিতে হ'ল এবং বহু কৃষককে এই Co-operativeএর দেনার জন্য ঘর বাড়ী বিক্রয় করে দিতে হোয়েছে। আজ আর কেহ Co-operative Societyর নাম ধরে না—ভয় করে। তারপর ১৯৩৬ সালের চাষীখাতক আইন। এই আইনে দেনদারদের সুবিধা হোয়েছে বটে, কিন্তু দেশের অন্য দিক দিয়ে সর্ব্বনাশ হোয়েছে। আজ একটী পয়সা ধার মেলে না। কেহ কাহাকেও বিশ্বাস করে না। ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য সব নষ্ট হোতে চলেছে।

প্রথম হতে যদি Co-operative Policy বা Technique ঠিক মত প্রয়োগ হোত তাহ'লে কৃষকদের এরূপ দুরবস্থা হোত না। এর জন্য যাঁরা movement চালিয়ে ছিলেন তাঁদের দূরদৃষ্টির অভাব ছিল, তাঁরা ঠিক মত চোলতে পারেন নাই। তাঁহারা গ্রাম্যসমিতিগুলি মহাজনী কোরেছেন। তাদের শুধু ঋণ দেবার ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন কিন্তু কিসে কৃষকদের অবস্থা ভাল হোতে পারে সে বিষয়ে তাঁরা চিন্তা করেন নি। এখন একমাত্র উপায় হোচ্ছে এই Co-operative principleকে ব্যাপকভাবে কার্য্যকরী করা। দেশের মধ্যে এমন হাওয়া সৃষ্টি কোরতে হবে যাতে Co-operative movement দেশের লোককে প্রকৃত উন্নতির পথে নিয়ে যেতে পারে।

আমাদের দেশে এক একর জমিতে আট মণ ধান হয় এবং জাপানে ৩২ মণ এবং Spainএ ৫৪ মণ পর্য্যন্ত হয়। কিন্তু বাস্তবিক এর একটা কারণ হোচ্ছে আমাদের দেশের জমিগুলি fragmentation of land. আমাদের Land Consolidation Society গোড়তে হবে এবং ধানের পরিমাণ বাড়াতে হবে। কাজেই যদি Co-operative Society এই সমস্ত জমিগুলিকে একত্রিত কোরে বৈজ্ঞানিক উপায়ে চাষ করিবার ব্যবস্থা করেন তাহা হইলে আমাদের দেশে সত্যিকারের কৃষকদের অবস্থা ভাল হবে এবং যদি Co-operative Bankএর সাহায্যে এই ফসলগুলি বিক্রয়ের ব্যবস্থা করেন তাহা হইলে তাহাদের কাছে অনেক বেশী টাকা আসিবে। আজকে দেশের মধ্যে যদি Marketing Society, Purchasing Society, Industry, Labour Contract, Insurance, Housing Society, Land Consolidation Society, Better Living

Society, Land Mortgage Bank ইত্যাদি এই সব যদি গোড়ে তুলতে পারা যায় Co-operative principleএর সাহায্যে তাহ'লে দেশের লোকের অবস্থা ভাল হওয়া সম্ভব না হ'লে আর কিছুতেই সম্ভব নহে। আজ আমাদের সারা বাংলাদেশে কি মধ্যবিত্ত জোতদার, কি কৃষক, কি ছোট ছোট জমিদার কাহারও অবস্থা ভাল নহে। আমরা টাকা পয়সা পাই না, ধার মিলে না। সেইজন্য প্রতি থানায় থানায় যদি Land Mortgage Bank স্থাপিত হয় তাহা হইলে মধ্যবিত্ত লোক, জমিদার, জোতদার, কৃষক সকলের অবস্থা ভাল হতে পারে। কারণ আজ বাংলার সমাজের যে অবস্থা তাতে আমাদের সম্পত্তি রক্ষা করা দায়, কারণ আমরা যে অবস্থায় পেঁছিয়াছি, তাহাতে আমাদের দৈনন্দিন জীবন যাত্রা নির্ব্বাহ করাও কঠিন হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। কাজেই এই অবস্থায় যদি সারা বাংলায় টাকা পাইবার ব্যবস্থা কোরতে হয় তাহা হইলে তাহার একমাত্র উপায় হইতেছে Land Mortgage Bank স্থাপন করা। কাজেই গভর্ণমেণ্টেরই একমাত্র দায়ীত্ব হইতেছে বিভিন্ন Union, থানা বা Subdivisionএ প্রচুর পরিমাণে Land Mortgage Bank স্থাপিত করিয়া অল্প সুদে long term loanএর ব্যবস্থা করা। ইহাতে Governmentএর অবস্থা ভাল হইবে এবং দেশের লোকের অবস্থাও ভাল হইবে ইতিমধ্যে যে সকল Co-operative Bank স্থাপিত হইয়াছে তাহাতে Government এর আধিপত্য খুব বেশী রাখা হইয়াছে। কিন্তু Co-operativeএর principle অনুসারে non-official elements বেশী থাকা দরকার। বর্ত্তমানে যেরূপভাবে Co-operative movement পরিচালিত হইতেছে তাহাতে Governmentএর ক্ষমতা সব চেয়ে বেশী এবং দেশের লোক ইহাকে ভয়ের চক্ষে দেখিতেছে। পূর্ব্বে দেশময় Co-operative movementএর যে একটা সাড়া পড়ে ছিল আজ সেটা নাই। কারণ গভর্ণমেণ্টের যে সকল লোক Co-operative Department পরিচালনা করিতেছেন তাহাদের উপর জনসাধারণের পূর্ণ আস্থা নাই। অনেক যায়গায় দেখা যায় তাঁহারা জুলুম করিতেছেন। আমার পূর্ব্ববর্ত্তী বক্তারা যাহা বলিয়াছেন ইহা বর্ণে বর্ণে সত্য। একজন খাতক একশত টাকা ধার লইয়া তাহাকে ছয়শত টাকা দিতে হইয়াছে। আর সবচেয়ে মুস্কিল হইল unlimited liability. সকল সময় এই সকল সমিতির মধ্যে ভাল লোক আসে না, যাহার দরুণ অনেক সময় নিরক্ষর লোকদিগকে ঠকিতে হয়। কাজেই আজ ভারতবর্ষে তথা বাংলাদেশের জনসাধারণের অবস্থা ভাল করিতে হইলে এই Co-operative principle এমনভাবে প্রচার করা দরকার যাহাতে সত্যই লোকের উপকার হয়। বর্ত্তমান বৎসরে Government যে ৫৪ হাজার টাকা বরাদ্দ করিয়াছেন তাহা যথেষ্ট নহে। বাংলার জমিতে পাট এবং ধান এই দুইটি প্রধান ফসল উৎপন্ন হয়। এখানকার চাষীরা বৎসরের মধ্যে পাঁচ মাস খাটে এবং সাত মাস বসিয়া থাকে। আমাদের দেশে যদি Hand Loom Industry গড়িয়া উঠে তাহা হইলে লোকের প্রভুত উন্নতি হইতে পারে। আজকে প্রত্যেক গাঁয়েতে যাহাতে Milk Union and Sales Society গড়িয়া উঠে তাহার প্রতি Governmentএর দৃষ্টি দেওয়া দরকার। বাস্তবিক nation-building department বলিলে বুঝায় Co-operative Department. কারণ ইহার দ্বারা Economic building of nation

সম্ভব। Governmentএর যদি জনসাধারণের প্রতি সত্যিকার দায়ীত্ব থাকে তাহা হইলে এই Department সুচারুরূপে পরিচালিত হওয়া দরকার, এবং ইহার মধ্যে যে সকল অত্যাচার, অবিচার, অনাচার আছে তাহা দূর হওয়া একান্ত বাঞ্ছনীয়।

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Sir, I have listened with very great interest to the debate that has been raised over this humble department of mine, known as Co-operation in Bengal. I hope that my friend Mr. Satya Priya Banerji now realises the efficacy of the measures that we have thought of in the new Bill. He has talked so much about the activities of non-official agencies. We find that some amount of control is necessary. My friend Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmik in closing up the debate also says that various things have been done in the past over which there was hardly any control. May I ask my friends to just pause for a moment and consider the provisions of the existing Act of 1912? If they do so, they will find that there is hardly any power given to Government to pull up any activities of this nature. (Mr. SATYA PRIYA BANERJI: Question!) My friend Mr. Banerji questions, but if I may remind him of the provisions of sections 17 and 35 he will at once realise that the responsibility that has been given to Government is to undertake audit and, when a society has so mismanaged its affairs that it is possible for Government to intervene, it can make an enquiry under section 35 with a view to liquidate its affairs. That is not a state of things that we desire. We do not desire to give effect to a provision of this nature. But we desire to put all such activities in the right, so that they may be of real service to the people of the rural areas of this province.

I will now try to give a brief reply to some of the charges that have been levelled against the activities of my department. Two of my friends, specially Mr. Shahedali and Mr. Banerji, while criticising the policy of the department, have said that the causes of failures have been hasty and defective organisation of societies, overfinancing of members, want of proper audit and so far as officers are concerned they have hardly had any education. That is exactly my grievance too. I am entirely at one with these two friends of mine when they suggest that these are the difficulties which have led to the deterioration of the movement in this province. It is from that point of view that when I assumed charge of my office I suggested that steps should be so taken that we might be able to pull up these matters and put everything in the right. I have never suggested that we have not made any mistakes in the past. In fact, while presenting this demand even to-day I have admitted that we have drawn our lesson from our past experience and with that lesson we ought to be able to put everything in the right.

If my friends turn to what we have done since 1937 as regards the appointment of officers, they will find that we have appointed the very best educated young men of the University who had not only very good

degrees, but before appointment had been selected by a committee over which sat Mr. Robertson, Chairman of the Public Services Commission. After selection they were given training and after training they were subjected to a competitive examination, and on the results of that examination they were appointed. If those gentlemen who were there before had not those qualifications, I do not know how we can be charged for what was done in the past.

I am extremely thankful to Mr. Banerji that he has at last realised that we have got an officer as the head of the department who has taken up matters in right earnest, and I also join with him in the hope that he has expressed that perhaps time will justify the choice that Government have made and that by our activities it will be possible for us to show to the House and to the outside world that we have really taken up this matter in earnest and do mean real business and do not want to sleep over all these things any more. Sir, I was extremely sorry when I found my friend Mr. Banerji using practically a slang expression, viz., flogging a dead horse. The officer he has criticised is no more in the department and, therefore, I would not consider it proper to say anything about the activities of that officer. It is true that we have appointed him as Special Officer, but the appointment is for a definite term and for a particular purpose. There was no one in Government service who would have been more able to take up this work and to finish it within the time prescribed, and, therefore, Sir, I did not expect that my friend Mr. Banerji would have gone on criticising one who is no longer in the department. Anyway, he did this. That is perhaps neither here nor there.

Now, Sir, I would make a submission with regard to his motion demanding a committee of enquiry. This has been one of the subjects which my friend who is not in the House to-day—I mean Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal—raised while discussing the budget in 1937. It was pointed out by me in reply that enquiries had been made. In fact, the first enquiry that was made was by some person with an amount of authority on the subject—I refer to Sir Malcolm Darling. He at the instance of Government had taken up this enquiry in 1934 and gave suggestions to Government. He was followed by an experienced officer of the department, Mr. Porter, who took up a detailed examination of the activities of the Central Banks, and on the reports of these two experienced officers Government took up the matter and have practically been taking steps according to the lines suggested by them. I submit, therefore, that there is no further room for having any committee of enquiry as is suggested by my friend Mr. Banerji. What after all will a committee of enquiry do? At present it will only hamper progress and will not allow us to go in the way in which we have been trying to do our best on the past experience of our activities in the movement. I submit, therefore, that my friend Mr. Banerji will not press his motion, so far as these two different subjects are concerned.

My friend Mr. Shahedali has gone further and has said something about the rate of interest. He has specially referred to three of the Central Banks in his district, namely, at Chandpur, Matlab and Laksam. Perhaps it is no news to the House, specially to those who are in touch with the co-operative movement in some capacity or other that when this movement came into the field in 1904 on the basis of the first Central Act, it found that the rate of interest that was charged from the rural agriculturists was between 60 and 70 per cent. The rate of interest was at once brought down to 12 to 15 per cent. I submit that was an achievement—an achievement of the type which we should appreciate. It is true that that also should not be the rate of interest at the present moment. I have had occasions in the past, in reply to some of the questions as also debates, specially the debate that was raised over the Co-operative Societies Bill, to point out to the House that the rate of interest has been considerably brought down and so far as the agriculturist member is concerned, he has to pay only Rs. 9-6 per cent. per annum. If we take an account of the actual amount that he has paid, it will be seen that he has paid much less, for he takes loan in a particular year and pays it up before the year is over and therefore he has to pay much less than what is stipulated in the bond. I submit, therefore, that there is not much room for further criticism about the rate of interest being high. Then, again, it all depends upon the rate of interest on the borrowed capital which has got, to be given by the Central Banks so that they may be able to finance the village societies. If we can raise money at a cheaper rate——

Mr. SHAHEDALI: On a point of information, Sir. I want to know whether the Hon'ble Minister is willing to limit the accrual of interest to the amount not exceeding the principal.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: I am coming to that point. So far as the rate of interest is concerned, I was submitting to the House that it all depends upon the rate at which we are able to raise our capital. If we are able to raise money at a cheaper rate, then it would be possible for us to advance money to village societies at a much reduced rate. Those of my friends who are in touch with Central Banks know very well the rate of interest they have to pay to their depositors. It is not possible for them to raise money at a cheaper rate, and consequently it is not possible for them to advance money at a cheaper rate also.

With regard to the particular question raised by Mr. Shahedali, my only answer is that if there are any such cases it is only necessary for him and for the society concerned to bring such cases before the Debt Settlement Boards at once so that following the principle laid down it will be possible for such Boards to make awards on that basis. I

submit, therefore, that if we have not been able to take advantage of the Act we have only to blame ourselves for that. There is facility given, but it is necessary for us to avail ourselves of that facility. If my honourable friends instead of criticising Government once a year had only assisted in conveying proper facilities to our agriculturist members, then perhaps these village societies would have been more benefited.

So far as the observations made by my friends Maulvi Idris Ahmed and Maulana Abdur Razzak are concerned, I am sorry to have to hear such things from them. They have also said about what happened in the past. My friends know quite well what steps we seek to take, and as soon as we are able to do so, they will find that Government have been able to take a definite line of action with regard to past liabilities. My friend Maulvi Idris Ahmed has said that so far as the constitution of the Debt Settlement Boards is concerned, we have only appointed big money-lenders on them. I submit, Sir, that is not correct, for instructions have been issued to officers to choose proper representatives of the debtors as well as of the money-lenders. The Commissioner of the Division who is the final authority under section 5 of the Act has got instructions to see that he is satisfied about the representation of the debtors and creditors as well. If anything has gone wrong anywhere, I would only request him to bring the matter to the notice of the Divisional Commissioner or of the Government so that the matter may be rectified. As regards the particular case he has mentioned, namely, the case of Salim Mirza of Nachole, I would ask him to advise the poor cultivator to place his case before the Debt Settlement Board.

As regards Maulana Abdur Razzak's grievances with regard to the Feni Central Bank and specially the Societies at Sunampur and Uttar Nandigram which he has particularly mentioned, I have no knowledge about them. With regard to a particular case which my friend was good enough to bring to my notice, an enquiry was directed and when the case was brought before the Magistrate's Court it transpired that there was no evidence to substantiate the charge. If there was no evidence, I do not know how the authorities of the Central Bank could be charged with having failed to investigate into a matter of this nature.

My friend has suggested in the end that we should put the old debts of the Co-operative Societies under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. I have been crying hoarse to bring to the notice of the House that the Co-operative Societies' debts are also included in the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act and to expedite matters we have established a Special Board for each Central Bank so that we are able to quicken the process and bring the unfortunate past events to a happy conclusion at an early date. It is therefore necessary that such debts should come up before these Boards as quickly as possible.

My friend Dr. Bhowmik has suggested that we should increase the number of land mortgage banks in the villages so that the villagers may be able to get money at a cheaper rate. If Dr. Bhowmik can suggest to us how to get money at a cheaper rate of interest, we would be too glad to consider his suggestions. I have indicated in my opening speech that although five land mortgage banks have been sanctioned by Government, it has not been possible to give a start to them as we have found that it is not possible for the Bengal Provincial Bank to advance any further money to them in order to float debentures, because the conditions are such that it is not possible to find any market for these debentures.

If in case Dr. Bhowmik has got any suggestion to give to us we will be extremely grateful to him, for we are no less anxious than he is to see that we are able to get more Land Mortgage Banks in the province to deal with such old debts of agriculturists and to see that they are not only able to consolidate their old debts, but they get money to be able to purchase more land so that they can increase their resources as much as possible.

As regards the question of consolidation, if you be good enough, you will yourself remember, Sir, what the poor Collector of Nadia did the other day with regard to a particular plot of land two miles away from the town of Krishnagar, and you will sympathise with Government as also with the poor Collector as to the amount of success that he had. It was after a good deal of personal influence that he exercised with the cultivators that he succeeded in the end to get them to agree to a scheme of this nature. A scheme of consolidation is being tried now in the Punjab. I had an opportunity of visiting that province in January, 1939. I had also an occasion to meet Sir Malcolm Darling, the expert on the subject, at Lahore. I also met the Hon'ble Minister in charge of this department at Lahore, namely, Sir Chatturam. He told me that they were finding extreme difficulty in getting a scheme of this nature to a successful issue. We know the position of the Bengali cultivators on the basis of the Bengal Tenancy Act. It is true that the holdings are very small. And because the holdings are very small and some of them are heavily involved, it has not been possible for anybody to find even good title in some of them so that they may be able to advance money on the security of those lands. We have also known what happens to a man who has been trying to remove a few inches of the boundary of a particular man's holding to a different direction. Having known that it is difficult for Government to undertake a scheme of that nature, but if some useful suggestion is given I shall be extremely happy to examine it and see how far we can succeed.

As regards the Land Mortgage Banks, I have already indicated that we are going to have five more in the province and perhaps, if

circumstances permit, it may be possible for Government to have one of them in the Chittagong Division and preferably at Feni where the banks are doing well. I do not think that I have anything further to add, and I hope that I have been able to meet the points that have been raised, and with this submission I respectfully request my honourable friends to withdraw the motions that they have moved; and if they do not do so, it will be my duty to oppose them.

The motion of Mr. Shahedali that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of Mr. Satya Priya Banerji that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division taken.

(Just before the House divided.)

Mr. SPEAKER: The House will stand adjourned for the prayer immediately after the division is closed.

(After the division was declared closed, the House was adjourned for 15 minutes.)

(After adjournment.)

AYES—47.

Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Abul Fazl, Mr. Md.
Acharyya Choudhury, Maharaja Sashi Kanta, of Muktagacha, Mymensingh.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya.
Barma, Babu Premhari.
Barma, Mr. Pupajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Barman, Babu Upendra Nath.
Bhawmik, Dr. Gobindra Chandra.
Biswas, Mr. Surendra Nath.
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra.
Chakraborty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Chaudhuri, Rai Narendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Goswami, Mr. Tulsi Chandra.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Khan, Mr. Debendra Lall.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Mahtab, Maharajkumar Uday Chand.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Mukherjee, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Naskar, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Nausher Ali, Mr. Syed.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Rai Bahadur Kshirod Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Sarkar, Mr. Nalini Ranjan.
Shahedali, Mr.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Tapurish, Rai Bahadur Moongtu Lall.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.
Zaman, Mr. A. M. A.

NOES—37.

Abdul Aziz, Maulana Md.
Abdul Halim, Mr. Mirza.
Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.

Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rasehid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rashed, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Ahmed Ali Enayetpuri, Khan Bahadur Maulana.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hossain, Mr.
Alfazuddin, Ahmed Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Asrafali, Mr. M.
Aulad Hossain, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Barat Ali, Mr. Md.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Edhar, Mr. Upendranath.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahader Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Gladding, Mr. D.
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Gomes, Mr. S. A
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hawkings, Mr. R. J.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Idris Ahmed Ma, Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Saheb Maulvi.
Kennedy, Mr. I. G.
McGregor, Mr. G. G.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Dr.
Mafizuddin Choudhury, Maulvi.
Magaira, Mr. L. T.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Masud Ali Khan Panni, Al-Haj Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Ishaque, Maulvi.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Nooruddin, Mr. K.
Norton, Mr. H. R.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Raikut, the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Dhananjoy.
Roy, Mr. Patiram.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Safiruddin Ahmed, Haji.
Sanaullah, Al-Haj Maulana Dr.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Sassoon, Mr. R. M.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, O.B.E.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Sinclair, Mr. J. F.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Smith, Mr. H. Brabant.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji
Walker, Mr. W. A. M.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C.
Yousuf Mirza.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

The Ayes being 47 and the Noes 87, the motion was lost.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: Sir, ——

Mr. SPEAKER: You have only half a day left. It is for you to choose whether to proceed with Co-operation or to take up Debt Conciliation.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Sir, it is better to proceed with Co-operation. It is no use discussing Debt Conciliation because debt will never be conciliated.

Mr. SPEAKER: Still, I must give some time to that. You may take half an hour more for Co-operation.

Mr. GIASUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100.

সভাপতি মহোদয়, আমার মনে হয় সকলেই এই কথা স্বীকার কোরবেন বাংলার খাতক বোলতে যাদের বোঝায় তারা সকলে গরীব কৃষক, কাজেই এই গরীব কৃষকদের অবস্থা সকলেরই সমান।

মহাজনী আইন এবং ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ড দ্বারা যে সকল খাতকের কিছু কিছু সুবিধা হোয়েছে, বাস্তবিক পক্ষে ঋণের দায়ে তাদের জোতজমা, ঘর বাড়ী বিক্রী হোয়ে যাচ্ছিল সেগুলি কিছু কিছু রক্ষা পেয়েছে। কিন্তু যে সকল খাতক Co-operative Bankএর নিকট হইতে টাকা কর্জ্জ করে, সেই সকল খাতকদের সেই সব সুবিধা দেওয়া হয় নি। এটা গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষে অত্যন্ত অন্যায় এবং অবিচার করা হোয়েছে। যখন Money-lenders Act এই হাউছে আলোচনা হয় তখন খুব জোরের সঙ্গে আমরা কৃষক প্রজাদলের পক্ষ হোতে বোলেছিলাম যে Money-lenders Actএর ভিতর Co-operative Bankএর খাতকদের ফেলা হো'ক, কিন্তু মন্ত্রী মণ্ডলী আমাদের কথা শুনেন নি, এবং এর দ্বারা ফল হোয়েছে এই গভর্ণমেণ্টের Co-operative Bankএর দ্বারা আমাদের দেশে একটা ভীষণ অত্যাচার চোলছে। ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ড হওয়ার পূর্ব্বে মহাজনরা খাতকদের ভিটামাটি সমস্ত নিলাম কোরে নিয়ে তাদের আসামের জঙ্গলে পাঠাত; বর্ত্তমানে তাদের অত্যাচারটা অনেক কমে গিয়েছে এই মহাজনী আইন ও ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ড হওয়ায়। কিন্তু সেই অত্যাচার আজ জনসাধারণের উপর এই Co-operative Bank এর দ্বারা হোচ্ছে। অন্যান্য স্বাধীন দেশে যে সকল উদ্দেশ্য নিয়ে Co-operative Bank স্থাপিত হয় সেই উদ্দেশ্যে Co-operative Bank আমাদের এখানেও হওয়া উচিত ছিল। অন্যান্য স্বাধীন দেশে দেখা যায় Co-operative Bankএর দ্বারা সেই দেশের বহু উন্নতি করা হোচ্ছে। সেখানে ছোট ছোট cottage industry এবং অন্যান্য শিল্প গোড়ে তোলবার জন্য Co-operative Bank জনসাধারণকে সাহায্য কোরে থাকে, কিন্তু আমাদের দেশের Co-operative Bank অর্থ শোষণকারী মহাজন-দের ন্যায় এ দেশে কাজ, কারবার চালাচ্ছে, কাজেই Co-operative Bankএর যে প্রকৃত উদ্দেশ্য ছিল সেটা একেবারে নষ্ট হোয়ে গিয়েছে। আমি আর বেশী সময় নিতে চাই না, যদিও এ সম্বন্ধে আমার খুব জোর বক্তৃতা দিবার ইচ্ছা ছিল কিন্তু Coalition দলের তরফ থেকে আমাদের ইদ্রিস্ ভাই যখন জোরের সহিত বক্তৃতা কোরে আমার প্রস্তাবের বিষয় সমর্থন কোরেছেন তখন আমি আর জোর বক্তৃতা কোরতে চাই না। ইদ্রিস্ সাহেবর বক্তৃতা শুনে আমরা খুব সন্তুষ্ট হোয়েছি এবং তিনি যদি আমাদের দিকে ভোট দেন তাহলে আরো সন্তুষ্ট হবো। আমাদের পক্ষ থেকে এখন হাসেমী সাহেব বক্তৃতা কোরবেন, কাজেই আর আমি বিশেষ কিছু বোলবো না।

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: Sir, Bengal is a peculiar province and still more peculiar are the ways and methods of its administration. We are bound to sanction more or less a grant of Rs. 18 lakhs for Co-operation. But the irony of it is that the Hon'ble Minister is out for non-co-operation rather than co-operation. He has declared non-co-operation not only with Caste Hindus but also with Mussalmans. Sir, the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Co-operation,

I mean the Ministry of Co-operation, is spreading non-co-operation in the province. I will, if I may be permitted, narrate a few instances which will conclusively prove that this Ministry is not at all serious about the co-operative movement. In my district, the district of Khulna, from which the Hon'ble Minister himself hails, the method of co-operation adopted is this, that he has started by appointing one Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies who happens to be his own relation. Sir, this is not the only instance in my district. If it is scrutinised it will be found, and some members of the Coalition Party belonging to my district, viz., Mr. Patiram Roy, Mr. Syed Mustagaswal Haque and Mr. Rasik Lal Biswas will bear me out, that the entire district of Khulna so far as Debt Conciliation Boards, nominations to union boards and appointments of Special Officers of Debt Conciliation and Co-operation are concerned, is composed of men who are almost all his own relations. And, Sir, where there are no relations of the Hon'ble Minister available, he has imported persons belonging to his community from Barisal, and he has appointed one such person in the Special Board at Satkhira. So far as the administration of the Co-operative Department is concerned, such is the condition of the co-operative movement in my district of Khulna. It will perhaps not be out of place if I mention here that within the last six months there have been two clashes between the Muslims and the Namasudras. In one case you will be surprised to learn that five or six Muslims were killed outright by the Namasudras, and it is very strange that all the accused persons in that case have been acquitted by the Sessions Court of Khulna at the intervention of the Hon'ble Minister——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Hashemy, you ought to have raised that question when the "General Administration" budget was before the House on the salaries of Ministers, but now you can refer only to his conduct as Minister in charge of Co-operation and not this question of inciting one community against another.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: I submit that it will not be out of place if I repeat that oft-quoted proverb, namely, while Rome is burning, Nero is fiddling. Only the other day, the Namasudras of Khulna——

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, Mr. Hashemy, I have to remind you again that you are referring to something which is not the subject-matter now under discussion.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: At least we expected, Sir, that the Hon'ble Minister would go to Khulna to settle the matter in the interest of the co-operative movement in my district.

Then, Sir, I shall now proceed to charge the Minister of Co-operation with nepotism and favouritism in my district. So far as the co-operative movement is concerned, for all practical purposes in the district of Khulna it is neither a Muslim Raj nor a Hindu Raj, but it is a Namasudra Raj that is prevailing there. Sir, it is a common grievance of all the people of that district except the Namasudras, and it has been brought to the notice of the Coalition Party on more than one occasion, and possibly, Sir, the time has come when we shall have to go to His Excellency the Governor to place our grievances before him. The Hon'ble Minister will bear me out that last year the amount that was spent on the co-operative movement for the district of Khulna was by far the largest in comparison to the other districts of Bengal, but you will be surprised to learn that the amount spent in my district was mostly spent for the benefit of the Scheduled castes people. And even amongst the scheduled castes he has made a nefarious distinction between the Namasudras and Poundras of Khulna. He has tried to exclude the Mussalmans not only of my subdivision of Satkhira but also of the Bagerhat and Sadar subdivisions of Khulna. So far as the Debt Settlement Boards are concerned, I have papers in my possession to prove that the Secretary of the Hon'ble Minister has written to the Commissioner in this fashion: "The Hon'ble Minister desires that in place of such and such a Mussalman, such and such a member of the Namasudra community should be taken." In this way he has influenced the Commissioner of the Presidency Division, the District Magistrate of Khulna and the local Subdivisional Officers. And in this way in season and out of season he has been patronising the candidatures of members belonging to the Namasudra community in preference to those of the Mussalmans and other Caste Hindus. It is not my grievance, Sir. It is not the grievance of my party alone. It is not the grievance of my community only. It is the common grievance of all the people of Khulna, Hindus and Muslims alike, excepting the Namasudras. This is the sample of co-operation that we have been experiencing in Khulna. The time has come for a change for the better. I ask the Hon'ble Minister to rise up and say whether the charges I have brought against him are true or not. The other day in reply to a question in this House, he denied that he has given the appointment of Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Khulna, to any of his sons-in-law. I say here and now that he has given the appointment of Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies to his elder brother's son-in-law. My time is almost up, Sir, and it will not be possible for me to give you the entire list of appointments as Special Officers, Sub-Registrars, members of the Debt Settlement Boards and also of the Special Boards of the district of Khulna. It is a grievance, Sir, not of one community against another, but of all the communities against one particular sect to which the Hon'ble Minister happens to belong. And now we are not going to tolerate the domination of a particular sect or community.

We want a fair field and we expect that not only the Hon'ble Minister but the entire Cabinet must take on the responsibility of changing the policy of Government so far as the Co-operative Department is concerned, particularly with respect to the district of Khulna where matters have come to such a pass that we will have to ask His Excellency the Governor to interfere in the matter.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Sir, I will take a little time to reply to the venom of the last speaker which I least expected or perhaps I should have expected from him, having known him for years, as such. But before I do so, will you permit me just to say a few words with regard to the observations made by Mr. Giasuddin Ahmad? His grievance is that the co-operative society debtors do not get any relief, and his suggestion is that they should be brought within the purview of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. I said a moment ago that I was crying hoarse all these years to impress upon the members of this House that the co-operative society members are also free to get the relief that they would have got under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. As regards the other question of bringing them within the purview of the Money-lenders Act, I would only ask him to recall the debate that took place on this subject in connection with the Bengal Money-lenders Bill. It was for this House to put the co-operative societies in the Money-lenders Act. And if the House did not agree at that time, I do not know how I can help them. He has also said that the co-operative societies elsewhere have developed the handloom industry. I wish he had known what the co-operative societies have done or the department has done in this province to develop the handloom industry. For years now we have been subsidizing some of the unions in the interior which have developed the handloom industry to a considerable degree. In 1940-41, the year that is now passing by, we have had Rs. 23,000 distributed among six such associations, namely, the Dum-Dum Women's Industrial Home, the Bengal Co-operative Industrial Soceity, the Dhaniakhali Society, the Islamic Ideal Home, the Mobarak Industrial Home, and the Bengal Home Industries Association. For next year also there is a provision of a larger amount for a larger number of such societies to be developed in that way. I submit, therefore, that his apprehensions are ill-founded, and if he had only studied the movement, he would have found that the Co-operative Department of Bengal has also done its best.

With regard to the scurrilous remarks made by an honourable member of this House, I refer to Maulvi Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy, I can only express my regret at such observations as he had made. I will now start with his grievances seriatim. He starts by saying that the Assistant Registrar of Co-operative Societies in charge of Khulna and Jessore is my relation. He is my relation in the sense that he has

married a daughter of my brother. I ask: Is that his disqualification? He was not appointed by me; he was appointed long, long ago before Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy could ever think of becoming a member of this Legislature. (Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy: You did deny that.) No, I did not. If you will remember, Sir, the question that he put was whether the Assistant Registrar was my son-in-law. I said in reply that I could assure the House that I had no daughter (Laughter.) and would ask the House to remember the question that he asked and the answer I gave. I maintain that position. Even if he were my son-in-law, the question is whether he has answered to the requirements of the particular appointment. He is a member of the Bengal Civil Service and his services have been lent to us by the Home Department which is now under the charge of the Hon'ble Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin. (Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy: He is your canvasser.) I not only deny that, but I say that it is false. There can be no question of canvassing, as there is no election now going on.

Sir, I will presently come to his grievances, and I will show to the House what sort of a request he could make to a Minister in charge of a responsible administration. Mr. Hashemy has said that I have influenced a number of elections of union boards. I do not know how I could have done so, nor do I know how I could have anything to do with union boards which come under the portfolio of the Local Self-Government Department. That is the way, Sir, how charges are made. Perhaps Mr. Hashemy sees something in front of him through his coloured glasses.

He has then charged me with nepotism and favouritism, and tried to substantiate that charge by saying that I have appointed people either of my own community or my relations. If he can find out any one of my relations whom I have appointed, I will certainly bow down my head to him. As regards my community, I do maintain that they have certainly got a right to ask of Government their legitimate share. So far as the appointment of Special Officers is concerned, I need only tell him and I can also assure the House that these officers were appointed on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission and not a single appointment was given to anybody who was not approved of by the Public Service Commission. The file went up to His Excellency the Governor and with his approval the appointments were made. If my friend can show a single instance in which we had appointed a man whose name was not recommended by the Public Service Commission and not approved of by the Governor, I will bow down my head. And this is, Sir, on the basis of the communal ratio decision taken by Government under which the scheduled castes have got 15 per cent. (Mr. Syed Jalaluddin Hashemy: Not by superseding Muslims.) Musalmans have not been superseded. They have got 50 per cent., and I can assure honourable members of this House that Musalmans, so far as this department is concerned, have got their full quota and perhaps

more. (Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Why more?) (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: So far as Khulna is concerned.) Sir, the honourable member should remember that we do not go by districts. We go by the communities of the whole province and not by the communities in a particular district or thana.

As regards the request which he made, if I may take the House into my confidence, I cancelled the appointment of a member of a Special Board for good reasons. That case was reported to the Collectors and the Commissioner. Three successive Collectors, of whom two were Europeans and another Hindu, reported that the conduct of that member was not above reproach, and on that basis they could not recommend him, and in the vacancy so caused on the report of two European Collectors and a Hindu Collector that the local scheduled caste medical man of Satkhira who had been practising there for years has been put on the Board. If that is repotism, I do not know what to say in reply. So far as the Board is concerned, the Chairman is an official. He is a Circle Officer, a Caste Hindu gentleman. There are two Muslims, on of whom is the chairman of local board and there is another Caste Hindu and a scheduled caste man of Satkhira. This is the only one scheduled caste man. If by that the Musalmans of Khulna are aggrieved, I plead guilty.

Then he says that I have done something in the matter of appointment of Sub-Registrars. I wish he had known the portfolio to which the appointments of Sub-Registrars belong. It is under the Hon'ble the Chief Minister. I wish he had also known how these appointments are made. (Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: I know.) Sir, I can only sympathise with his ignorance, but I never expected that he would have gone beyond the limits and would have tried to poison the House by saying things which are not only false, but false to his knowledge. (Loud applause from the European and Coalition Benches.)

The motion of Mr. Giasuddin Ahmed that the demand of Rs. 17,30,000 for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary Mullick that a sum of Rs. 17,30,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "42—Co-operation" was then put and agreed to.

25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 20,23,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation".

Sir, in presenting this demand to the House I need only make a few observations at this stage. I had an occasion in the past to submit to the House not only the activities of this department in working the

Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act, 1935, but the achievements reached so far to minimise the difficulties of the indebted rural population of this province. I may mention at the outset that whenever anything in the nature of a complaint or of a real difficulty has been brought to our notice, immediate action has always been taken. Again, when we function under this Act of 1935, we do so for the purpose of conciliating the debts of our agriculturists by bringing them within their paying capacity and giving them proper time and facility to pay the adjusted debts by spreading it over a number of years in easy instalments on an amicable basis so that they may have some breathing space of time to be able to work harder with greater cheerfulness for the purpose of making the two ends meet and also of being able to pay their debts.

It was stated that if the rent due to the landlord for the use and occupation of a piece of land by an agriculturist was not paid in time, not only the rent receiver—whether he is a proprietor, tenure-holder or anybody of that description—but also the agriculturist tenant who is to pay the rent, must suffer. It is practically the land which pays the rent. Again, the principlal amount of the rent cannot be touched or varied. In that view of the matter the sooner this type of liability is discharged, the better for the agriculturist as also for his immediate landlord so that the latter may also respect his obligations. From this point of view rules have been made by which the rent portion of the debt may now be separately treated and awards made on that basis. The advantage gained by this rule will be appreciated when I shall in a moment place before the House the number of applications that we have received from the creditors including landlords as well.

Apprehensions have been expressed from time to time that a legislative measure of this type does really cause dislocation of the normal business of the society and that in times of urgent and immediate need even people with the best of intentions are deprived of the sympathetic assistance of their neighbours even for a short time. The amended Act which has been put into operation since the 11th July last makes the position amply clear with regard to the first where it is distinctly stated that any liability incurred after the 1st January, 1940, will not be regarded as debt within the meaning of the Act. As regards the second, rule 51A promulgated by Government in January, 1939, clearly indicates that a debt, the principal of which does not exceed Rs. 50, incurred after the 1st January, 1939, cannot be varied by the Board.

When I presented my demand last year under this head, I mentioned that we were able up till then to establish 3,707 Ordinary Boards and 221 Special Boards in the province. Our idea was to establish a fair number, bringing the total of Ordinary Boards to 3,996 and that of Special Boards to 238 in the course of the current year, but on account of the various difficulties we have been able only to establish up to the 31st January 1941, 3,875 Ordinary Boards and 235 Special Boards. To expedite work we have vested all the Boards with powers under

sections 9(*2*), 9(*3*) and 13(*2*). We have also vested 1,417 Ordinary Boards with powers under section 19(*1*)(*b*) and out of these 645 Boards have also been vested with powers under section 19(*1*)(*c*). The power under section 21 of granting a certificate is also being given to Ordinary Boards. Powers under section 22(*1*)(*a*) relating to insolvency has been given to a number of Special Boards.

The difficulties to deal properly with a class of debt known as usufructuary mortgage were ventilated both in the House and outside and the Bill, passed by both the Houses and which has now taken the shape of law since July last, has removed them. The other difficulty with regard to the cases of joint tenancy has also been removed by the amendment of section 9.

The House may be interested to know that the number of applications that these Boards received up to October, 1940, is 2,306,605. Of these 971,520 have been filed by the creditors including the landlords and the remaining 1,335,085 have been filed by the debtors. Out of the applications filed, the Boards have disposed of 1,354,493 and in those, where the cases have ended in awards, the creditors' claims were for a sum of Rs. 18,73,12,516. This amount when determined under section 18 of the Act came to be Rs. 12,18,11,203 and when an award was made under section 19 it came to be Rs. 7,46,75,664.

The number of cases which has been settled under section 19 (*1*) (*a*) is 479,090 and the cases now pending is 954,971. I regret that we have not got the figure to show the exact amount of the rural debt involved in those applications, but if we take an average it may not be wrong to suggest that the total amount of rural debt brought before these Boards is about a sum of Rs. 80 crores. It will therefore appear to the House that while functioning under this Act and depending upon the goodness of a large body of honorary workers, we have not treated this matter of rural indebtedness with a light heart. We have taken it up very seriously and the results achieved so far even in the face of various difficulties cannot be said to be unsatisfactory at all.

In the course of my tour in the interior of the province, I always made it a point not only to meet and to sit with the members of the Boards at work, but also to see for myself the difficulties that they feel when they deal with this very difficult problem affecting two sets of contending parties without strict legal sanction behind them to make any order except on an amicable basis. I have had the officers also with me at such meetings when I explained to them the real points of view. I also made it a point to meet very frankly the members of the Bar Associations at different places when I explained to them not only the provisions of the Act and the rules and instructions framed by Government, but also the activities of this department through these Boards in this province. Whenever any suggestion has been given to me by such natural leaders of public opinion in the interior,

I have examined the same and whenever it has been possible I have accepted it, and when it has not been so possible, I have explained my points of view to them. The complaints made at times about the conduct of such members here and there may not be ill-founded; but as no human institution is perfect, I do not pretend that this institution is all perfect; but when specific cases have been brought to our notice, the matter has always been enquired into and whenever necessary suitable action has been taken. Each week's Official Gazette will make it clear to anyone that some action is taken somewhere in the province with respect to such complaints. It cannot therefore be said that we are unmindful of the responsibility which we have got to discharge in the best interests of the province.

There is only one other matter which I need mention before I put my demand before the House. Question has been asked in various quarters as to how long this measure is going to function, and if it is to stop with the expiration of a period of five years. The intention of Government is apparent from the last amended Act where it is said that a liability incurred after the 1st January, 1940, will not be taken to be debt within the meaning of the Act. But I do not know where the second idea has been obtained from. All that is said in section 8 of the Act is that an application has to be filed before a Board within five years of its establishment in any local area. We have now got Debt Settlement Boards all over the province except the districts of Darjeeling and Chittagong Hill Tracts. Even if we have not got a Board in all unions of the province, we have got Special Board covering all the areas. I appeal to the House and through it to the outside public as well, so that they may take note of this fact and see that all possible applications come before the Boards before this period of five years runs out.

I hope, Sir, I have been able to point out to the House the activities of this department seeking to mitigate the difficulties of the large body of our agricultural debtors, and I hope the House will have no hesitation in giving their accord to the demand under this head for which I now formally move.

Mr. C. MORGAN: Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Co-operative Credit and Rural Indebtedness, but while doing so, I have some criticisms to offer.

Sir, we are all very doubtful as to whether the Agricultural Debtors Act has really turned out to be of benefit to the agriculturist, and I am more than doubtful as to the results obtained by Debt Settlement Boards appointed under this Act. I am very sorry to see that my honourable friend Mr. Surendra Nath Biswas is not here, because I am sure if he was here he would have said "Hear! hear!" I know, Sir,

that the Hon'ble Minister in charge is very enthusiastic about the Agricultural Debtors Act and the Debt Settlement Boards, but here I must join issue with him. I have firsthand knowledge of the working of the Debt Settlement Boards in large zemindari and other areas, and I am afraid I am quite unable to say that they are satisfactory. In fact, I may say the results are very unsatisfactory.

The position as regards cases at the moment is practically as follows: Out of 100 per cent. cases put up to the Board about 25 per cent. have been disposed of and 75 per cent. are still pending during a period of 12 months. Surely, Sir, this is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. Figures are given by Government showing the marvellous results which have been obtained in certain cases, but nothing is said about the number of times in which Debt Settlement Boards do not meet, and also cannot hear cases in the absence of a quorum.

The Hon'ble Minister must realise that when cases are down for hearing both sides concerned have to be ready with the necessary documents and have to put in an appearance. The Hon'ble Minister can, therefore, easily understand what a great deal of trouble is given when the Boards do not meet regularly and dispose of cases expeditiously. These Boards, as we all know, are voluntary bodies, and I am quite certain that so long as they are voluntary bodies the results will be most unsatisfactory. The Boards are perhaps quite competent to deal with simple questions of fact, but it is obvious that they cannot be expected to deal with the many complicated legal questions that arise out of the Act. Their difficulties have been added to by the recent amendment of the Act providing for the settlement of usufructuary mortgages, and I would like to be assured by the Hon'ble Minister that the Boards have received proper guidance and instructions as regards this amending Act. I would, therefore, Sir, request the Hon'ble Minister to insist that the District Officers keep a very close watch on the activities of these Debt Settlement Boards, and whenever the position is such that cases are not being disposed of in a proper and expeditious manner such Boards should be immediately dissolved. Not that I have any hopes that new Boards will do any better work, but at any rate it will show that Government's desire is that pending cases should be reduced to a minimum. If such were done, vexatious delay and unnecessary expenditure would also be reduced to something reasonable.

I would like to emphasise that in all cases arrears of rent should be the first charge where such arrears are due. The reason I wish to emphasise this point is that the revenue paid to Government by zemindars is, as everyone is aware, a very large proportion of the total revenue which Government collects, and, therefore, in order to enable zemindars to pay their dues promptly, it is essential that agriculturists should pay their rents without unnecessary delay.

Everyone knows that recently zemindars have had to pay large sums due to Government on a specific date, whereas they have been unable to collect rents from their tenants. This is most unsatisfactory from every point of view, and I trust Government will see that this state of things is remedied as soon as possible.

Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 20,23,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100, and in this connection I want to raise a discussion about the failure of Government to amend the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act, 1935, in order to give retrospective effect to the——

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Maqbul Hossain, as I have already said, the failure to amend an Act cannot be the subject-matter of a budget cut motion. You can only discuss the grievances of the people against the Act in a general way.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: On a point of order, Sir. When I raised this point previously, you were pleased to admit that suggestions for the amendment of an Act may be the subject-matter of a cut motion.

Mr. SPEAKER: You see, after all, the budget cut motion is really meant for the removal of certain grievances of the people, but the grievances against a piece of legislation which has already been passed by the House cannot be the subject-matter of a budget cut motion. I think that is the parliamentary practice.

Mr. MAQBUL HOSSAIN: মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, কৃষকের দেনার দায়ে যে সমস্ত সম্পত্তি নীলাম হইয়া পাওনাদারের হস্তগত হইয়াছে তাহা ইং ১৯৩০ সন হইতে চাষীদিগকে ফেরৎ দেওয়ার বিধান রাখিয়া ইং ১৯৩৫ সনের চাষীখাতক আইন সংশোধন করার জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট অক্ষম হওয়ায় আমি এই ছাটাই প্রস্তাব উত্থাপন করিলাম।

ইং ১৯৩১-৩২ সনের কৃষক আন্দোলনের স্রোতে যখন বাংলার মহাজন শ্রেনী ভাসিয়া যাইবার উপক্রম হইয়াছিল, যখন বাংলার মহাজনগণ অনন্যোপায় হইয়া খাতকের দ্বারে দ্বারে তমসুকের তমাদি রক্ষার জন্য বিপন্ন অবস্থায় ধন্না দিতেছিল তখন বাংলার আমলাতন্ত্র গভর্ণমেণ্ট শোষক মহাজন শ্রেণীকে রক্ষা করার জন্য এবং কৃষক আন্দোলনকে ভাঁওতা দিয়া দমন করার জন্য ইং ১৯৩৫ সনে ঋণ সালিসী আইন প্রণয়ণ করেন। গভর্ণমেণ্ট যদি এই আইন প্রণয়ণ না করিতেন তাহা হইলে বাংলার খাতকের ঋণের বোঝা লাঘব হইত, খাতককে ঋণের জন্য সর্ব্বহারা ও দিশাহারা হইতে হইত না। তখন কৃষক সমাজ এমন ভাবে সংঘবদ্ধ হইয়াছিল যে সামান্য একজন কৃষক কর্ম্মীর আহ্বানে অতি অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে হাজার হাজার কৃষক সমবেত হইত, হিন্দু মুসলমান কৃষক মনে

করিত যে তারা পরস্পর ভাই ভাই, তাদের স্বার্থ এক, তারা সংঘবদ্ধ থাকিলে তাদের দাবী দাওয়া কড়ায় গণ্ডায় আদায় করা সহজ সাধ্য হইবে। বর্ত্তমানে ধর্ম্মের ধুয়া তুলিয়া যে ভেদাভেদ্ সৃষ্টি করার সুবিধা হোয়েছে তখন এ সুযোগ ছিল না।

ইং ১৯৩৫ সনে আমলাতন্ত্র গভর্ণমেণ্টের যুগে যে আইন রচিত হইয়াছিল বর্ত্তমান স্বায়ত্ত শাসনের ও জনপ্রিয় মন্ত্রী মণ্ডলীর যুগে তাহা প্রয়োজনের অযোগ্য। তখন যাহার হাতে এই বিভাগের ভার ছিল তিনি ছিলেন আমলাতন্ত্র গভর্ণমেণ্টের চাকর। তাঁর ক্ষমতা ছিল না এর বেশী কাজ করার; কিন্তু এখন যার হস্তে এই বিভাগের ভার অর্পিত হয়েছে তিনি নির্ব্বাচিত হয়েছেন জনসাধারণের ভোটে, তিনি গভর্ণমেণ্টের চাকর নহেন। তিনি হোয়েছেন দেশবাসী জনসাধারণের চাকর। কাজেই তিনি জনসাধারণের ভোটে নির্ব্বাচিত হইয়া ও জনসাধারণের টাকায় চাকুরী করিয়া জনসাধারণের কাজ করিবেন না কেন? তাঁর দায়ীত্ব জনসাধারণের নিকট। তিনি যদি জনসাধারণের কাজ করিতে অক্ষম হ'ন, তাঁর যদি জনসাধারণের উপকার করার ক্ষমতা না থাকে তবে তাঁর পক্ষে নির্ব্বিবাকে পদ-ত্যাগ করা কর্ত্তব্য। জনমতের সমর্থন না পাওয়ায় এবং দেশবাসীর উপকার করিতে অক্ষম হওয়ায় বৃটিশ প্রধান মন্ত্রী নেভেল চেম্বারলেন্ ও ফ্রান্সের প্রধান মন্ত্রী মসিয়ে দালাদিয়ে নিজ ইচ্ছায় পদত্যাগ করিলেন। আর বাংলার এই সব মন্ত্রী মাটি কামড় দিয়া থাকিবেন তবু পদত্যাগ করিবেন না।

আমার এই প্রস্তাবের নিম্নে তারকা চিহ্ন দ্বারা footnoteএ বলা হইয়াছে "under examination." কিন্তু, আমি বলি গভর্ণমেণ্ট হইতে পরিক্ষাধীনে আছে বলিয়া এবং গভর্ণমেণ্ট হইতে কার্য্যে পরিণত করা হইবে বলিয়া অনেকবার অনেক বিষয় সম্বন্ধে প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হইয়াছে। আমাদের এই সমস্ত দেখিয়া অভিজ্ঞতা হইয়াছে যে গভর্ণমেণ্ট যে কার্য্য একদিন পরে করিবেন বলিয়া প্রতি-শ্রুতি দেন তাহা পাঁচ সাত বৎসরেও করা হয় না। আমরা জানি যে বড় লোকের একদিন গরীবের দশ বৎসরের সমান। কাজেই আমি মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের নিকট প্রতিশ্রুতি চাহিতেছি যে তিনি আগামী sessionএ এই আইন আমার প্রস্তাব অনুযায়ী সংশোধন করিবেন কি না?

বঙ্গীয় চাষী খাতক আইনের সুযোগ এবং সুবিধা চাষীরা পাইতেছে না। ঋণ সালিসী বোর্ডগুলি যে ভাবে গঠিত হইয়াছে তাহাতে ঐগুলিকে এক একটি ঘুষের আড্ডা বলিয়া উল্লেখ করিলেও অত্যুক্তি হয় না। কোন কোন সালিসী বোর্ডের মেম্বর ও চেয়ারম্যান ঘুষ লইয়া খাতকের সর্ব্বনাশ করিতেছে। ঘুষ না দিলে মামলা লওয়া হয় না, এমন কি মামলার তারিখ পর্য্যন্ত জানান হয় না। জনসাধারণ এই সমস্ত দুর্নীতি দমন করার জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট আবেদন নিবেদন করিয়াও কোন প্রতিকার পাইতেছে না। ইহাতে দিন দিন জনমত গভর্ণমেণ্টের বিরুদ্ধে গঠিত হইতেছে। গভর্ণমেণ্টের প্রয়োজন অনতিবিলম্বে এই সমস্ত দুর্নীতি দমন করার জন্য কঠোর হস্তে ঘুষখোর মেম্বর, চেয়ারম্যানদিগকে শাসন করা।

ইং ১৯৩০ সন হইতে দুনিয়াব্যাপী ভয়ানক অর্থ সঙ্কট দেখা দেয়। কৃষিজাত ফসলের মূল্য অসম্ভবরূপে কমিয়া যাওয়ায় বাংলার চাষীর আর্থিক অবস্থা এমন শোচনীয়

হয় যে সামান্য দেনার দায়ে তাদের হাজার হাজার টাকা মূল্যের সম্পত্তি মহাজনের হস্তগত হয়। এই অবস্থায় বাংলার অনেক চাষী ভূমিহীন হয় এবং তখন হইতেই এদেশে ভূমিহীন কৃষকের সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি হইতে থাকে।

বাংলাদেশে যে কমিউনিষ্ট ভাবাপন্ন লোক দেখা যাইতেছে ইহা তাহারই একমাত্র কারণ। কাজেই আমি মনে করি গভর্ণমেণ্ট ইং ১৯৩০ সন হইতে যে সমস্ত সম্পত্তি খাতকের হস্তচ্যুত হইয়াছে তাহা খাতকদিগকে ফেরৎ দিবার বিধান রাখিয়া আইন সংশোধন করিলে বাংলা হইতে কমিউনিষ্ট আন্দোলন দূরীভূত হইবে।

Maulvi MUHAMMAD ISRAIL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to point out to this House, so far as the Debt Settlement Boards are concerned, that there are certain defects which ought to be remedied. I have just now heard from Mr. Morgan that the working of the Debt Settlement Boards is not at all satisfactory. The honourable member complains that a large number of applications remain pending in the hands of these Boards. I may draw his attention to the fact that the circumstances that prevail in our Civil Courts are none the better. There was a Civil Justice Committee constituted to find out as to how to expedite the disposal of the suits pending in Civil Courts. These Civil Courts are presided over by paid officers. Even in Courts over which paid officers preside, suits remain pending for more than two years, and Government had to intervene by appointing a Civil Justice Committee to devise ways and means as to how to expedite the disposal of civil suits. Then, Sir, he has raised another question. So far as the rent is concerned, it ought to be the first charge. Government have already issued instructions to that effect, and I have found that unless rents are first paid, the Debt Settlement Board does not take up the question of settlement of the other debts. Moreover, so far as rents are concerned, the instalment granted is much less than in ordinary cases. So the question that he has raised has not much force in it.

I shall now come to the Special Debt Settlement Board dealing with co-operative debts. So far as these Debt Settlement Boards are concerned, these Boards have been set up by Government to deal with the debts of persons to co-operative societies as well as their debts to other *mahajans*. Cultivators are not getting any relief from these Boards owing to the fact that most of the members of these Boards are representatives of the Central Banks, and the interests of the Central Banks are always uppermost in their mind. So I would request the Hon'ble Ministers to see that the representatives of the Central Banks are changed and the representatives of the debtors find their place on these Boards. Moreover, interest is allowed on the principal up to the satisfaction of the awarded debt, and the Court fees are being realised on the determined amount from the debtors alone, and no steps are taken to realise half of the Court fees from creditors by the certificate

procedure as provided in the amended Act. And it becomes impossible in these hard days for the debtors to pay the entire Court fee, and hence many cases are dismissed for non-payment of Court fees.

I may also point out another difficulty that has lately arisen with regard to the Small Cause Court debts. Claims tried by mufassal Small Cause Court Judges are not treated as debts under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act. Hence no stay order is being issued in these cases, and where award has been given, stay order is now being vacated to the great inconvenience and detriment of the poor debtors, and their properties are being sold by auction. So, I would appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to table an amendment in the Second Amendment of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act now pending before the Council and thereby remove the defect. The Second Amending Bill has not as yet become the law, and it may take several months more before it is placed on the statute book. But it may be found after its passage into an Act that the Boards through which this Act will be administered have been abolished on the expiry of the statutory period of five years. Hence this Act will become a dead letter. So, to avoid this anomaly the Second Amendment Bill should be so amended that the power will continue for a further period of two to three years only to deal with cases arising out of the Second Amendment Bill. I would point out that the Boards in many places have not been empowered under section 19 (*c*). Great difficulties are being experienced in my own subdivision owing to the want of Boards not being invested with power under section 19 (*c*). The Act has been amended and the Governor has assented to that Act some 10 months ago, but the Boards have not been empowered with power under section 19 (*c*) and cannot give delivery of possession in usufructuary mortgages. So this power should be vested in all Boards enjoying 19 (*b*) power. Special Boards have not been empowered in many cases under section 22. This should also be immediately done.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the fag-end of the day and in a not very thick House, if I rise to speak it is neither in a mood of acrimony nor in a spirit of hostile criticism. Sir, being a humble lawyer in a very humble mufassal district I have got some experiences which I should place before the House so that the Minister in charge of the department may, if possible and necessary, consider whether particular courses of action should be taken.

Sir, I think the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act is one of those legal measures which if properly put into operation would have introduced better economic stabilisation in our province than it has actually done. The possibilities latent in the measures themselves have not been fully worked up. Sir, I do not agree with my friend

Mr. Morgan when he says that this enactment has done more harm than good. Well, I would rather go so far as to say that it has done some good, but it is a pity that more good has not been done out of it and if more good has not been done out of it, it is not really so much on account of the natural incompetence of our men who have been selected as Judges, though they are certainly not trained persons, but I think the Government who ought to have kept a more vigilant eye over the working of the Debt Settlement Boards have gone by default. Sir, I know that the persons who are placed in charge of the administration of these Boards are neither lawyers nor jurists nor legislators nor men with any glamour of education, still at the same time I know that they are persons who are in touch with village life as it is, they are persons gifted with some common-sense, and if only the Government had succeeded in instilling into their minds a sense of justice, I think, Sir, our village Boards would have been more welcomed as a forum of judicial administration than the glamorous tribunals over our head.

Sir, I will go straight into the grievances that are working in my mind. Sir, Mr. Morgan has referred to the Debt Settlement Boards being not able to deal with questions of fact, and he has complained that complicated questions of law are also left to be determined by them. Certainly, that is the crux of the whole trouble. You know, Sir, that even where Munsifs and Judges fail to determine certain questions, these village tribunals are expected to deal with very complicated questions of law. But then, Sir, there is a great deal of difficulty. The theoretical separation of the fact portion of the case from the law portion of the case is neither possible nor desirable. As a matter of fact, Sir, in almost all questions of civil dispute there is as much a controversy of law as there is a controversy of facts. So what should be the check? The check is not by separation of certain Boards for dealing with facts and by the introduction of certain Boards for dealing with law. The solution lies in getting certain Boards at least which will be competent to deal with mixed questions of controversial law and fact. For this my constructive suggestion, if it is worth anything to the Hon'ble Minister in charge, would be that in every subdivision, just as we have got Special Boards working nowadays, we should have either the old Special Boards constituted of new men having legal knowledge or we might have side by side with these Special Boards other Boards composed of specially trained persons who might deal with cases which raise issues complicated both in questions of fact and in questions of law. But, Sir, I am sorry to say that the policy of the Government instead of being a policy of trying to deal better justice has been to try to deal more injustice in these cases and for the illustration of my point I will invite the attention of Mr. Morgan to the particular cases of appeals. Sir, in the previous Act even when Debt Settlement Boards failed in their administration, failed in their

judicial capacity, there were the Munsifs with at least some amount of judicial training to come to the relief of the party and to try to rectify obvious maladministration either in point of fact or in point of law. But what has been done by the Government now? The Government have departed from the old policy of having appellate officers with judicial experience and have vested the Subdivisional Officer, who is already an overworked and a vicarious officer, with the functions of an appellate officer, and Mr. Morgan will probably not join issue with me when I say that the difference of legal acumen in a Munsif and the legal acumen in a Subdivisional Officer at least in matters relating to civil dispute is well known. I will illustrate by one example, Sir. Some time back I appeared before a Subdivisional Officer in connection with a particular case, and as I was waiting there two young lawyers were appearing before the Subdivisional Officer in connection with an award which was given by the particular Board in which the sole question was the question of limitation. You know, Sir, that there are certain compromise decrees or compromise bonds in which the amount is payable by instalments. The stipulation as usual was that in the case of failure of one instalment the creditor would be entitled to get the whole amount by executing the decree. There, Sir, the question was as to whether the entire amount was realisable as a matter of privilege or was it a matter of liability, namely, the whole thing should be executed then and there. You know, Sir, that these instalment decrees and bonds in relation to the question of limitation have gone up to Full Benches of several High Courts and have gone up to the Privy Council where apparently divergent decisions have been obtained, and what is more remarkable is that two days before that I was myself appearing on behalf of a party before the District Judge and the District Judge took about two to three days to hear that matter and he had not come to a decision on that question. But I found there that the Subdivisional Officer in course of less than five minutes disposed of the highly controversial matter and passed a decision affirming the decision of the Debt Settlement Board, and I was sure that the decision of the Debt Settlement Board was wrong. So, Sir, we ought to be alive to the real trouble. We must have Special Boards consisting of trained men who can deal with this question. As soon as it is found that a matter raises a question of unusual difficulty, it should be transferred to a Special Board, and I would also appeal to the Hon'ble Minister to consider the question of going back to the old policy of giving appellate powers to Munsifs and Judicial Officers.

Sir, there is one other matter which ought to be placed before the House. Our men are naturally good men. They are competent to do the thing. They have got common-sense. But their desire of justice is being affected on account of the Government's policy with regard to war fund. When Munsifs were appellate officers, these Debt Settlement Boards were more conscientious in dealing with cases because

they knew that the appeal would go to a foreign forum. But the Sub-divisional Officers, they know, are their own men. They pat on their back. If they succeed in raising contributions towards the War Fund, they enjoy the favour of the appellate officers. They know that in consideration of their collections towards the War Fund they will in return get support in the matter of disputes which would go up to Sub-divisional Officers in appeal. I am not placing these facts in any spirit of accusation or in a spirit of bravado. I am simply pointing out the real difficulties and dangers. Our men are good men, but the policy of the Government is making them bad. I hope that Mr. Morgan when he considers this question will also consider the bearings of these matters.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Sir, I am extremely grateful to my friends Mr. Morgan and Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal for giving me some very good suggestions, as to how from the point of view of one the work of the Board can be speeded up and from the point of view of the other how a proper decision on law and fact can be reached. I have mentioned to the House in the beginning the steps that Government have taken to quicken the process of the settlement of the cases by these Boards. Mr. Morgan has referred to the case of arrears of rent. I have made a mention of the fact in my opening speech, and I need only call his attention to Rule 62A, framed on the 17th of January, 1939, whereby the rent portion of the debt was directed to be taken out of the other debts to be settled as quickly as possible. I appreciate the anxiety expressed by Mr. Morgan that unless the rent portion is settled earlier, the landlord above him is not in a position to pay his dues either to the Government or to his superior landlord. That has been done and has been done for over two years now. In view of that, we have got a very large number of applications now coming before the Board from the landlords themselves, especially from the Burdwan Division. I submit therefore that the anxiety expressed by Mr. Morgan perhaps will not continue in view of the steps that we have taken. So far as the other question of quickening the process is concerned, I do admit that when the Boards start their work, it must be slow, because they are not trained in law. Therefore, they must take some time before they get to know the provisions of the law and the rules framed under it. They have got to take instructions almost at every step and there must be some officer to guide them along proper lines. Sir, not only the rules, but the last amendment of this Act have made it clear that notices under sections 12, 13 and 14, which originally took three months, can now be done in the course of a month. We have also issued instructions to the Board about the maximum period that they can and would take with respect to one single case and there are also instructions given to the Collectors to see that these things are definitely followed.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: What is the maximum period?

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Generally five months.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Is there any circular?

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: Yes. There are these definite steps taken when any delay takes place, and if a case is such that it should be disposed of early, there is power given to the Subdivisional Officer to do the needful. If that matter is brought to his notice, he can take his case away from the Board and put it before another Board which has less work. I know of cases in the district of Bogra—I visited that district on the 13th and 14th of May last—where we had the then Collector who is now a Secretary to the Government of Bengal who made it a point to see that there was no congestion in any particular Board and whenever he found that a particular Board was unduly congested, he used to take the excess of cases from that Board and place them in charge of another Board. I submit, therefore, that not only the provisions of the law but the rules and instructions that we have issued are sufficient to deal with congestion and to see that no unusual delay takes place in the disposal of these cases.

As regards the cases which concern the question of law and fact, my friend Mr. Sanyal suggests that we should have a Board of the type of Special Boards at subdivisional headquarters and district headquarters with some men of legal training. I hope, Sir, I shall not be misunderstood nor should I have any feeling of that nature when I tell him that when the Special Boards were originally constituted we made it a point to see that there was at least a member of the legal profession on each one of them, besides the official Chairman, the Circle Officer. There happened two very unfortunate cases. I would not mention the places, but the cases were reported to the High Court. On that the High Court acting under one of the rules (Rule 972 of Circular Orders) issued instructions to all the District Judges and Magistrates that practising lawyers must withdraw from the membership of these Boards. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: There are non-practising lawyers.) I will come to that. With respect to that question I myself had a discussion with the Chief Justice, Sir Harold Derbyshire, with the then Registrar who is now a Judge of the High Court and my then Secretary, Mr. Holland. We sat and discussed for over an hour. I am sorry that I could not convince the Chief Justice of the desirability of our suggestion. So far as having trained lawyers on the Board is concerned, my friend Mr. Sanyal may be pleased when I tell him that the High Court has now agreed to give us the services of junior Munsifs who are free to act as Chairmen of the Special Boards. They

are doing it now. We have now got some Munsifs acting as Chairmen, Special Boards, at the headquarters. We have one such at Dinajpur and another at Barisal. Further, we have been able to secure the services of retired Judges to act as Chairmen. I remember one such case. Mr. Mati Lal Roy, retired District Judge, has been good enough to accept the Chairmanship of a Board in Faridpur. We have also got retired members of the legal profession to act as members. There is one such member at Naogaon in the district of Rajshahi. So we are not unmindful of this particular point raised by Mr. Sanyal. We have done all that could be done in the matter. I submit that Government cannot be charged with the negligence in the discharge of their duties so far as these questions are concerned.

What is it that a Board is called upon to decide? A Board is called upon to find out whether the debtor is an agriculturist within the meaning of the Act. My friend Mr. Sanyal suggests that these Boards are composed of members who have no legal knowledge. Without any legal training they can certainly find out whether the debtor is an agriculturist or not. That having been found, the next question arises whether the amount that he mentions as his debt is correct or not. If the creditors do not agree, they have got to sit and find out what that amount is, and having found that they have got to find out the properties or assets which the debtor has. After that they have got to make an award on that basis. If there is any question of unusual difficulty or if any unusual question of law arises, power is given to the Board to refer the matter to the Subdivisional Officer to see that the case is sent to a Special Board, and that can be done either at the instance of the Board or by an application for a transfer under section 39 of the Act. Therefore, Sir, when these things do arise, they can be disposed of in the way I have just now indicated. A question as to whether the appeal against an order made by a Board should be taken before the Subdivisional Officer or before the Munsif has also been raised. This was perhaps a demand of the members of this House, especially of most of the members of the Coalition Party when it was suggested that these appeals should lie before the Subdivisional Officer. Some of them who have experience of how appeals have been dealt with know the actual position, but I would not go into details. So far as this is concerned, I suggested to the High Court that the Munsifs should be permitted to undertake tours in the interior to see how these Boards functioned so that they might have firsthand knowledge of the activities of these Boards which are under this Act, not bound by the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code and the Indian Evidence Act, but unfortunately it was not agreed to. Therefore, we thought that those officers who have got to move about in the interior and are familiar with local conditions would be the best officers to deal with the appeal against the order of a Board to prevent any misunderstanding or misapprehension.

Appeals are provided for under section 40 of the Act for any omission or even commission. My friend, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, may be assured that under the amended Act which came into operation on the 11th July last the District Judge has got the power of revision. I do not see, therefore, that there can be any further apprehension in view of the present composition of the Boards.

Then, Sir, my friend, Mr. Maqbul Hossain, complains of the fact that the provisions of the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act have not been made properly applicable to the cases of debtors, and he observes that usually cases of corruption take place in these Boards. So far as that is concerned, Sir, I can tell him that in most cases of appeal the decisions of these Boards have been upheld——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to say whether he has in his possession any figures to show the number of cases that have gone up to the District Judge under section 40(*a*), and the number in which the decisions of the lower forum have been reversed so that we may know the correct position?

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: I am sorry I have not got the figures with me here. I can collect them, if necessary, for his information.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I think it should be collected because that would give us an idea as to how far section 40(*a*) has been to the good of the people.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: I shall try to do that.

So far as the question of bribery and corruption is concerned, I am the last person to agree that the large body of honorary workers to the tune of over twenty thousand men should be so sweepingly charged with corruption. As I have already indicated in my opening speech, some of the allegations may not be ill-founded, and whenever any complaint has been made, it has been at once looked into. And there is, Sir, section 4 that gives Government ample power to deal with such cases. I may cite one instance to which Mr. Jalaluddin Hashemy has referred where a member had to be removed from the Board, and I have said also that the Official Gazette of each week points out to us the action that had been taken. When such a large body of people have given their services to us, I should be the last person to say that they

are a corrupt body. They may have made some mistakes, but to make mistakes is only human, and when mistakes are committed, there are the superior Courts to put them right.

With regard to the suggestion made by my esteemed friend, Maulvi Muhammad Israil, so far as the question of according powers to these Boards under section 19(*1*)(*c*) is concerned, I have issued instructions to the Commissioners of Divisions that the Boards should be vested with this power as quickly as possible. I assure him that I will certainly bear his request in mind and see that these instructions are followed. I will alo remember his request about the time being extended when the Second Amendment Bill comes up for consideration in the other House. Sir, the amended Act has made ample provision to make an award in the case of non-payment of Court fees and the Collector has got ample power now to realise the Court fee by certificate procedure. This statutory power being there, I do not see how it can be said that the cases are not dealt with properly and quickly. As regards the suggestion for a proper representation of the debtors on the Co-operative Societies' Boards, I think the members themselves are also debtors from one point of view but if cases, where debtors are not properly represented, are brought to my notice, I shall certainly see that debtors are also represented in such cases so that the Boards may enjoy the confidence of the local public for making the settlement of this difficult problem more effective.

I hope I have fully answered the points that have been raised by my friends. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: What about these Boards' activities in raising war contributions?) I am sorry to hear that my friend, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, hints at the activities of these Boards in raising war contributions. I know of no case in which the members of a Debt Settlement Board can be charged with having been functioning in that capacity——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I can tell the Hon'ble Minister that the Debt Settlement Boards have been functioning as agencies for raising war contributions.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: I submit, Sir, that that is too sweeping a remark for me to answer. I have been, as a matter of fact, to almost all the districts of Bengal, and I can say that nowhere could I find any such activity on the part of these Boards.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: At least I can tell him that my district has been functioning in that way.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: I am sorry to confess that his is the only district I have not yet visited, and I hope Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal will give me an opportunity to visit his district when the next mango season comes——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I may tell the Hon'ble Minister that when there is indigestion from too much of mango-eating, plantains are prescribed as an antidote.

The Hon'ble Mr. MUKUNDA BEHARY MULLICK: If this is the type of hospitality in this district, I have done well in not visiting it up till now. However, with these words, Sir, I would request my friends to withdraw their motions; otherwise, I must oppose them.

The motion of Mr. Maqbul Hossain that the demand of Rs. 20,23,000 for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary Mullick that a sum of Rs. 20,23,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "25—General Administration—Debt Conciliation" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was adjourned at 7-53 p.m. till 10 a.m. on Saturday, the 22nd March, 1941, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta on Saturday, the 22nd March, 1941, at 10 a.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Sir MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 161 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Complaint lodged against the Kalimpong Mission Industries Association.

*183. **Mr. W. C. PATTON:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state whether any complaint has been made against the Kalimpong Mission Industries Association to the Director of Industries?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the copy of the complaint?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the matter has been enquired into?

(*d*) If so, what is the result of the enquiry?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) There was no complaint properly so called. A certain gentleman made some remarks about the Association which were communicated to the Secretary of the Association for comments.

(*b*) It will not be in public interest to make the remarks public.

(*c*) Yes.

(*d*) The remarks were found to have been based on a misapprehension.

Distress of the tenants of Malda district.

*184. **Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) whether the economic condition of the tenants of Malda district has become more acute since the last flood; and

(*ii*) whether there is an apprehension of distress prevailing in some parts of the district this year?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) (*i*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Government are considering the desirability of stopping the revaluation in the district till the economic condition improves?

(*c*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) what is the value of yield per acre on average in the district;

(*ii*) what is the basis of calculation of valuation per acre for the purpose of revaluation in the said district; and

(*iii*) whether objections have been filed before the District Magistrate disputing the valuation of yield per acre?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy): (*a*) The economic condition of the tenants in the district improved to a certain extent since the floods of 1938 but owing to less than usual rains during the present year and consequent partial failure of crops it is not so good as in normal years. Some distress is apprehended in some unions of only the Barind area of the district.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) (*i*) and (*iii*) The value of yield per acre is Rs.45 on average for the district. But for the purpose of revaluation of cess, the district was at first divided into 2 units and the value of yield per acre was determined at Rs.40 in one unit and Rs.50 in the other. On hearing objections, the Collector divided the district into 4 units and valued the yield per acre in these units at Rs.31-4, Rs.32-8, Rs.35 and Rs.40 respectively.

(*ii*) The valuation is based on the results of local enquiry.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what are the bases on which these valuations have been made?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise. That is in the Cess Act.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: How is it that the valuation was decreased and increased at intervals?

Mr. SPEAKER: Just go through the Cess Act.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: I know the Cess Act, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then the question does not arise.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reasons for this variation in the valuation assessed by Government officials?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: As I mentioned in answer (*ii*), the valuation is based on the results of local enquiry and it must be on certain facts, *e.g.*, the value of the produce, the rate of rent, the cost of cultivation, the facilities of irrigation, etc.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what were exactly the reasons which led one enquiry to value things at one rate and the subsequent enquiry to value at a different rate?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, enquiries are not always perfect. The Collector discovered that the preliminary enquiry was not perfect and he heard objections. He divided the area into four units and revalued it and came to the conclusion.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Wil the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the dispute raised by the people as regards valuation for which a subsequent valuation was necessary has been removed or it still exists amongst the people?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: My friend is labouring under a misapprehension. It is not the acreage rate under Chapter 7A. It is the valuation of the produce. The acreage rate is much lower. The acreage rate in the *barind* area is Rs. 6-4, in the *tal* area Rs. 6-8, in the *deara* area Rs. 7 and in the rest of the district Rs. 8 per acre.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the maximum acreage rate should not be more than one-fifth of the valuation rate fixed by the District Magistrate and the rate just now read out by the Hon'ble Minister is just one-fifth and not below that?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes, it should not be more than one-fifth.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the acreage rate is going to be fixed at less than one-fifth?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I do not think that is the correct interpretation of the law. It should not be more than one-fifth.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: In view of answer (*ii*), will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the Collector's judgment regarding the ascertainment of valuation is final?

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, that you have to see in the Cess Act.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the economic condition of the district since last revaluation has deteriorated? The preliminary question of revaluation according to Cess Act is that the valuation should be 20 per cent. more than the previous valuation.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: No, Sir, revaluation under Chapter 7A is likely to bring down the total cess receipts by a large proportion.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that the preliminary question in the Cess Act is that in case of revaluation income of the cess must be increased by 20 per cent.?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I do not know of any such provision in the Cess Act.

Collector of Dacca and water-hyacinth pest in Arial Bil area.

***185. Mr. ATUL CHANDRA SEN:** (*a*) With reference to his reply to the supplementaries to unstarred question No. 132 of the 13th September, 1940, will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state whether he has since enquired into the matter why the Collector of Dacca did not give any reply to a telegram that was sent to him from the Arial Bil area on the 24th July, 1940, requesting him to receive a deputation of cultivators to discuss the problem of eradication of water-hyacinth pest?

(*b*) If so, is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of holding an enquiry forthwith into the matter of the damage done to the paddy as admitted in his answer (*a*) of the said question No. 132?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: (*a*) I have enquired into the matter. The Collector received the telegram when he was very busy in connection with His Excellency the Governor's visit, threatened communal disturbances at Dacca and a riot at Murapara. The telegram and the letter from Babu Jnanendra Das of Malikanda confirming the telegram asked the Collector to receive a deputation in order to devise methods of tackling the water-hyacinth problem of the Arial Bil area and as the barricade had been completed by that time, the Collector thought that this had ceased to be an urgent matter and attended to his more urgent preoccupations. He regrets that owing to the hard pressure of work that he had at that time he omitted to send a reply. He however visited the locality as soon as he was comparatively free but as none approached him in connection with the proposed deputation he thought that the completion of the barricade had removed the need for such a deputation.

(*b*) The honourable member is referred to the answer to clauses (*a*) (*iv*) and (*vi*) of unstarred question No. 132 asked by himself, given on the 13th September, 1940. As all possible steps were taken for the destruction of the water-hyacinth that grew internally, the question of any further enquiry into the matter does not arise.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: With reference to reply to (*b*) will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether after all possible steps taken by Government the hyacinth concerned has been removed or not?

Mr. SPEAKER: After all steps have been taken it will grow again!

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Sir, my question is whether hyacinth has been removed or not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Suppose the answer is "Yes", how do you prove that it will not grow again? It is no use asking such question.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: I hope the Hon'ble Minister will give the real answer.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us hope that water-hyacinth will not grow again.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS.

27—Administration of Justice.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 71,12,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice".

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 71,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100.

This cry of separation of the judiciary from the executive is a very, very old cry, not only in this province but throughout this country. The reasons behind this cry are very well founded and the question has been gone into by a large number of committees in all the provinces and the considered opinion not only of the public but also of many jurists and lawyers is in favour of this proposed separation. We know that the executive is a party to the large number of criminal cases that come before the court in this province and it has been the bitter experience that the Crown is a party to all criminal proceedings but more strictly speaking and in by far the larger number of cases that have been fought out before the criminal judiciary the executive is a direct party. Sir, it has been the bitter accumulated experience of all concerned that the hand of the executive plays a great deal of visible and invisible part in at least these police cases. Sir, the presumption of criminal law is that the accused should be regarded as innocent, but so far as criminal trials are concerned, at least in the cases in which the police is the prosecution the presumption for practical purposes and all along has been that the accused is guilty unless he can come out by super-human efforts. You know, Sir, that the Magistrates who sit in trial over these criminal cases have always got to look up to the Police Department for inspiration and guidance. I do not blame the Magistrates for that. It is the system which makes them so for the police in their prosecution take not only an interest but a passionate interest and it is a point of prestige with the Government to see that police prosecution do not end in an acquittal in favour of the accused and this point of prestige is so keen with the Police Department and our system is so vicious in this respect that a trying Magistrate, however independent, however firm in his judicial mind, has got to offer explanations in the matter of cases in which they acquit the accused. Sir, it is a day to day affair. If a police case ends in an acquittal the Police Department calls for the records across the shoulders not only of the trying Magistrate but also of the District Magistrate. The Superintendent of Police furnishes a note

to the District Magistrate and the District Magistrate forwards that to the trying Magistrate and the trying Magistrate has got to write another judgment by way of defending himself. I know that there are Magistrates who are very much steel-framed and who are able to withstand all the interference and pin pricks of the Police Department. But it is extremely sad that the number of such Magistrates is very few and far between. After all, our Magistrates are all human beings and they have also to look up to their own promotions and future emoluments and as human beings it cannot be expected that they will be so much extraordinary in their mental make-up as to sacrifice the future of their career in the interests of what they consider to be proper justice. This vicious system has polluted the entire criminal judiciary and in spite of the age-long demand this popular Government has not seen its way to remove the evil which has been focussed and commented upon from time to time. Now, Sir, if this cry of separation was true in the bureaucratic days, to-day, Sir, under provincial autonomy which has given a responsible Government the necessity for such separation has been all the greater because the Government to-day is gradually getting mixed up with the affairs of the day to day life of the people. The large number of departments that have come into existence, the expansion of the previous departments of the Government, all these things mean that the Government is getting more and more into touch with the daily activities of the people at large and this gradual increase of Governmental activity means larger association between the executive on the one hand and the people on the other and in that view of the matter it is to-day more than necessary that the forum of justice should be placed absolutely beyond the day to day associated life of the people in relation to Government. Sir, you know that not only in connection with Union Boards, not only in connection with the Debt Settlement Boards but also in connection with ordinary and extreme activities of the Government the Subdivisional Officers and the District Magistrates have got to be identified with the problems and the day to day activities of the people at large and the fundamental principle of all administration of justice, viz., that there should be detachment in the mind of the persons dealing out justice, cannot be expected to exist in this context and you know, Sir, that it is not merely the constructive economic activities that bring Government more in touch with the people but the political activities also bring the Government into greater touch and we know that in political matters Government cannot be dispassionate and the executive being so many arms of Government cannot also be expected to be dispassionate in a large number of dealings with the people.

Sir, I would just refer the House to two extracts which I quote, one from the presidential address of the President of the Lawyers

Conference this year and another from the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee. Mr. Barada Prasanna Pain, an eminent lawyer and a legislator of long standing in the course of his presidential address opined: "In the forefront of our programme there must always remain the question of the separation of the executive from the judiciary. The introduction of popular Government in the province has not made any difference, so far as this question is concerned. If the administration of justice is to remain unpolluted and uncorrupted, it is imperative that the separation must be effected."

Then, Sir, I want to read out a paragraph from the address of Maulvi Abdus Samad, the Chairman of the Reception Committee:—

"The first and the most obvious step that has to be taken in this connection is to see to the immediate separation of the judiciary from the executive. This old but none too old cry of such separation need no longer be a cry in the wilderness. It is a painful order of the day that justice has lost its pristine purity by being tied to the wheels of a vicarious executive whose unscrupulous and overjealous stranglehold on law's freedom is daily on the increase. Magistrates who are invariably stuck up in the mud of administration in its multiple relation to the public cannot on any account be able to maintain that supreme detachment which is the first and the most fundamental equation of judicial work. Just consider a Subdivisional Officer holding a war fund meeting in a village in which a certain person is actively and helpfully participating and from which another person is absenting himself suspiciously from the officer's point of view and the same Magistrate sitting in appeal under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act in which the above two persons are contending parties. Such and more glaring absurdities have become the rule. Justice is limping into a blind alley of constant failures. Who in Bengal does not know to-day that administrative exigencies have become the invisible determining factors in more than ninety per cent. of the litigations that are being fought in the Criminal, Revenue and special judiciaries which are neither dependent upon nor responsible to the High Court? Justice is shamed out of such a forum and assistance of lawyers is hardly sought, since law itself is powerless against the administrative requirements and obligations of the judge. We are daily seeing how the Bengal Government and the Bengal Legislature are vesting busy executives with new and gradually increasing judicial powers, while the independent and much dependable judiciary is vegetating upon empty diaries."

The very true words very nobly expressed, because we know that the Subdivisional Officer is constantly touring round his area and getting in touch with the people in connection with the political activities of the Government, and he knows the persons who are in

favour of Government and also persons who are against this Government, and having this knowledge in his mind, it is preposterous to expect that while he sits in judgment over cases, either in connection with the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Act, or with criminal or revenue matters, when he sits in judgment over contending parties who are mixed up with these political favours and disfavours, a human judge will be able to be so dispassionate and detached as to rise above the political squabbles and be able to administer a fair deal to the parties.

Now, Sir, look at the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate is vested with some powers under the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Act as to whether sanction should be given to a party who comes in as a debtor whose debt is beyond Rs. 5,000 and less than Rs. 25,000. He also knows the political leanings of persons and in his judgment he is bound to be influenced by political considerations. Apart from this, I also beg to draw the attention of the House to the fact that these executives are very much overworked and their lives are very much miserable. A Subdivisional Officer has got to entertain visitors in the morning, has to go round and see certain allies of the Government; he comes back late in the morning; he has to rush through his meal and then to go to the court and deal with revenue files, gun licence files, *khas mahal* files, and all sorts of other files; and then at the fag end of the day he sits upon judgment in controversial matters like Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act cases which sometimes trained judges even are not able to dispose of quickly. Look at the District Magistrate. He has got to sit over various committee meetings from the morning till late in the afternoon, and then he sits and hears a criminal appeal case—an appeal on which a Sessions Judge would require a full day to dispose it of, is disposed of by the District Magistrate in less than fifteen minutes. And while the lawyers argue in such a case, the District Magistrate looks at the clock because he is just thinking of another committee meeting which is probably scheduled fifteen minutes after that. This miserable state of things must be remedied. Sir, there is after all nothing more sacred and nothing nobler than the administration of justice. If justice is administered in this way, the sooner it is remedied, the better. Let us completely separate the two. Our munsifs and judges are starving for want of work, and our executives are overworked. Let us release the executive from the burden of judicial work. Let us have them for nation-building activities only. Let us have them entirely free to do outdoor work. Let them go round the local areas and find out the local problems. And let them constantly associate with the local people. Let them be an arm of the administration in the sense that the administration is for the joys and sorrows of the people. Let the judiciary be free from all connection with the executive. This will have a two-fold blessing. In one sense it will place justice on a safer pedestal and in

another it will liberate the executive from the tyranny of judicial work and make them available for a large number of constructive work which this province requires so badly and so quickly.

Babu LAKSHMI NARAYAN BISWAS: মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, বিচার বিভাগ সম্বন্ধে আমি দুই একটী কথা বলতে চাই। এই পরিষদের অনেক সদস্যই এই বারের Budget Sessionএ বাংলাদেশের প্রজাসাধারণের জন্য অরণ্যে রোদন করার ন্যায় রোদন করিয়া আসিতেছেন, কিন্তু সেই রোদনে কর্ণপাত করার মত কেহ আছেন বলিয়া মনে হয় না। বাংলার বিভাগীয় কর্ম্ম কর্ত্তাদের কর্ণে tube লাগানো হইয়াছে এবং ঐ tubeটা এমন ভাবে fit করা আছে যে, দেশের জনসাধারণের দুঃখ দুর্দ্দশা তিরোহিতের জন্য যিনি যতই রোদন করুন না কেন, কিছুতেই ঐ প্রকার রোদন তাঁহাদের কর্ণে প্রবেশ করিবে না। গভর্ণমেণ্টের বিচার বিভাগে কতকগুলি পিওন নিযুক্ত আছে, তাহাদের সহিত প্রজাসাধারণের কি সম্বন্ধ তাহাই আমি কিছু বর্ণনা করিব। সভাপতি মহোদয়, বাংলা দেশের প্রজাসাধারণের বর্ত্তমান সময়ে জমিদারের সহিত কি প্রকার সম্পর্ক, তাহা বলিতে গেলে অনেক সময়ের দরকার, যাহা হউক আমি মোটামুটি কিছু বলিবো। আজকালকার জমিদার প্রভুরা চার টাকা, পাঁচ টাকা বেতনের তহশীলদার নিযুক্ত করিয়া কোথায় যে কি ভাবে বসবাস করিতেছেন, তাহার খোঁজ পাওয়া বড় শক্ত। তহশীলদার প্রজার সহিত অন্যায় ভাবে মনোমালিন্য সৃষ্টি করিয়া সম্পূর্ণ অন্যায় ভাবে প্রজাকে জব্দ করিবার জন্য আদালতের সাহায্য গ্রহণ করিয়া থাকে। জমিদার মাত্রেরই আদালতের উকিল দিগের মধ্যে একজন করিয়া Agent আছে। তহশীলদার বাবু সাধারণতঃ দরিদ্র প্রজাদের উপর অভিমানে অন্ধ হইয়া ছুটিলেন কোর্টে এজেণ্ট বরাবর, ঐ এজেণ্ট উকিলকে বলিল "উকিল বাবু, এই প্রজাটী অত্যন্ত উদ্ধত প্রকৃতির, টাকা পয়সা দেওয়া দূরে থাক তাহার ব্যবহারে আমার জমিদার প্রভুর আর মান সম্ভ্রম থাকে না, সুতরাং এর আরজি শমন হইতে নিলাম ইস্তাহার পর্য্যন্ত আদালত হইতে জারি করিয়া দিতে হইবে। নিলাম ইস্তাহারের পরে রেজেষ্ট্রী কার্ডখানি ও নিলামের একদিন আগে সেরেস্তাদার বাবুকে বলিয়া ছাড়ার বন্দোবস্ত করিতে হইবে। যাহাতে ঐ প্রজা বেটা নিলাম ঠেকানর কোন সুবিধা না পায়।" সভাপতি মহোদয়, এক্ষণে বিভাগীয় মাননীয় মন্ত্রীমহোদয় ও এই পরিষদের সদস্যবৃন্দ একটু চিন্তা করিয়া দেখুন, আদালতের সামান্য পিওনের দ্বারা প্রজাসাধারণের কি সাংঘাতিক সর্ব্বনাশ হইয়া আসিতেছে। আমি বলিতে চাই যদি বাংলা দেশের প্রজাসাধারণের দুই এক বিঘা জমি গভর্ণমেণ্ট রাখিতে চান, তাহা হইলে আদালতের ঐ প্রকার পিওনের আরজি শমন ইত্যাদি জারি করা কাজগুলি Post Office সাহায্যে জারির ব্যবস্থা করিলে প্রজাসাধারণের মহোপকার করা হইবে, নহিলে জমিদার আর পিওনের চাপে প্রজাদের কোন অস্তিত্ব থাকিবে না। অতএব বিভাগীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয় আশা করি সত্বর এ বিষয়ে যত্নবান হইবেন। এই কয়েকটী কথা বলিয়া আমি আমার বক্তব্য শেষ করিলাম।

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my esteemed friend, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal, has raised a

very old question, namely, the question of separation of the judiciary from the executive. On this question, many committees were constituted, and many persons discussed this question both from theoretical and practical points of view. I myself was one of those who thought very keenly on the subject and was of opinion that in the interest of purity of justice separation of the judiciary from the executive was essential. But, Sir, it must be admitted that it concerns not only this province but it concerns the other provinces also. And I have found that the so-called advanced Congress provinces have been of opinion that it is not only not feasible but in the interest of better administration it is not necessary to separate the judiciary from the executive——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Why not go ahead of the other provinces?

Khan Bahadur Maulvi JALALUDDIN AHMAD: I am thankful to Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal that he wishes this Government of Bengal to go ahead of the Provinces of Madras and Bombay and also of the United Provinces although this credit has so long been denied to this province. Apart from the difficulty of the cost in the separation of the judiciary from the executive there is another very important question. In the Criminal Procedure Code there are some sections with which the executive is intimately connected, and the questions relating thereto have to be dealt with not on the ordinary evidence but on the report of the Police. Therefore, there are sections like sections 144, 147, 145, etc., where speedy remedy is desirable and in connection with such sections you cannot do away with the powers that are given to the executive for the speedy disposal of such cases. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: The munsifs are given magisterial power.) In that case munsifs will also be executives. My honourable friend is at present lamenting over the overwork of Subdivisional Officers and their executive bias in the administration of justice, but my own experience is that nowadays I am sorry to say most munsifs demonstrate executive bias in the disposal of cases. Whenever there is a case where Government is concerned they show unconscious bias for the Government and sometimes more than what executive officers themselves would do. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: We do not agree.) Nowadays, the munsifs are imitating executive officers in their dress, behaviour and in every walk of life. There was a time when even High Court Judges were not allowed to mix with the Governor. There were two separate alleys for the High Court and the executive head. High Court Judges did not tread the path which was trod by the executive, but at present, Sir, even with the High Court Judges there are interchange of lunches, dinners and meetings with executive heads. It appears, Sir, that the question of separation of general administration from justice is theoretically very sound.

There have been cases where High Court Judges have been appointed as Executive Members of Government, and there have been complaints from English Bar that they should not be appointed as Members of the Executive Council of the Government to keep the morale of justice above suspicion.

Now, Sir, with regard to the question of appointment of District Judges and promotion of munsifs, that is also in the hands of Government. Munsifs want to rise to the position of Subordinate Judges who in turn want to be promoted to the rank of District Judges. They also look to Government favour. There is no freedom anywhere. In the districts there is at present the question of contributions to the war fund complained of by Mr. Sanyal. I know of one Indian I.C.S. District Judge (though not Bengalee) who is more keen on the war fund and more keen in his suggestions for raising subscriptions for the war fund than even the Collectors or the Commissioners themselves. I myself have seen this sort of attitude among Indian (though not Bengalee) I.C.S. District Judges. (Mr. RASIK LAL BISWAS: In Chittagong?) I do not say about Chittagong. So, you cannot dissolve the union between the judiciary and the executive. Officers, whether they are in the judiciary or in the executive, are members of the same federation. Of course, improvements can be made in this direction, I mean in the matter of recruitment to the judiciary as was mentioned in the last year's budget. For instance, Sir, recruitment of District Judges may be from lawyers on a much more greater scale than from the I.C.S. At present there are many I.C.S. officers in the judiciary. They have got less experience than members of the Bar. Of course, Nawab Sahib said that only members of the I.C.S. with 10 years experience are appointed as District Judges. Let them have 10 years or 5 years whatever they like, but I.C.S. District Judges are not expected to sit in judgment over the decisions of Subordinate Judges who have got an experience of 20 or 25 years. So, it is desirable, and I appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Justice, if it is at all in his power, to reduce the number of I.C.S. officers in the judiciary at least in the District Judge's cadre. He should see that more members from the Bar are recruited for appointment as District Judges. In this connection, Sir, I cannot but mention one fact, namely, that hitherto opportunities have been held out to the members of the High Court Bar only and not to members of the mufassal Bar. There is no restriction so far as members of the mufassal Bar are concerned. The statute says that District Judges may be recruited from pleaders, advocates and attorneys, but hitherto no member of the mufassal Bar has found a place in the District Judge's cadre. I hope and trust that Nawab Sahib will at least in his regime see that one or two members of the mufassal Bar are appointed to the post of District Judge.

There is another thing, Sir, which can be done by the Local Government, and that is the appointment of Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors. They exercise a great influence on the administration of justice. There are some Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors who have been removed—at least I know of one case—for too much zeal on behalf of Government. I will not mention his name. He was found by one District Magistrate to have tutored witnesses and although he was a very capable man he was not retained. If proper persons are appointed to the post of Public Prosecutors and Government Pleaders, there will be some assurance of justice being done in the criminal and civil administration when Government is a party. My own experience is that first class pleaders of good reputation are never generally appointed as Government Pleaders. Government do not always go in for efficiency and scruples in a lawyer. They make these appointments from other points of view. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition benches.) Public Prosecutors are not the best men of the Bar. If you go on analysing the appointments of Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors throughout the province, you will find that first class men are never appointed. Even when there are first class men present, second class men have been taken and even in some cases third class men have been taken. (The Hon'ble Mr. H. S. SUHRAWARDY: You cannot blame this Government.) I never blame this Government, but it is this undesirable practice that the Government have also accepted. I expect that this Government which wants to set right the injustice done by the old bureaucratic Government should show that appointments are not made on account of zeal shown for Government or on account of some kind of political service rendered or the likes and dislikes of the local executive heads. For instance, Sir, I know that one man was appointed because he did more work for the Government during the terrorist campaign. Another man was appointed Government Pleader because he was a member of the old Council although he had no civil practice. (Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: In short favouritism.) (Laughter.) Yes. At Dacca Government pleadership has gone to rather a junior man, although a non-Muslim.

These facts might not be known to the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Justice, and it is only for his information that I bring them to his notice. His position is unique in the Cabinet. He cannot be charged with nepotism. He will do justice even to his colleagues. Even if Mr. Suhrawardy goes wrong he will set him right. (Cries of "Hear, hear" from the Opposition benches.) For instance, if there is any injustice in sentence, he can remit it. If a member of the Cabinet is hauled up before a Court and punished he can remedy it. So, he is not a party with any other member of the Cabinet. He can do justice, he can take note of things against all the Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors. I think, Sir, that these posts can be filled up

with qualified and honest men without any consideration whether they are more zealous on behalf of Government or whether they are more particular about the interest of one side or other or acceptable to the Collector or Commissioner.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the motion of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal with regard to the separation of the executive and the judiciary because it is not feasible under the present circumstances.

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Sir, the hardy annual separation of judicial from the executive function has come to-day also. This will come as long as the world lasts. My friends know it for certain that Government cannot go on in water-tight compartments. If you say that the judiciary must be absolutely separated from the executive, you want to have a theoretical state of affairs which is not at all practicable in current politics. I will give you instances where it is not at all practicable for us to think that the executive should be absolutely outside the judiciary. Take the case of all criminal cases for the prevention of crime. Sir, even the Greaves Committee recommended that all such cases must be tried by a person who will be responsible not only to the High Court but also to the executive Government. This is a matter which may evoke some laughter from the Opposition, but it is a fact that such an important committee which sat over the matter gave that recommendation to the country. You cannot say that a Judge of the High Court and all the people who worked on that committee could not understand the position of the country and would say something which the country would not accept. I have full confidence in their sense of judgment and I believe that they were perfectly right. My friend also knows it as a fact that the judicial system has given full liberty of action to the people except in some minor cases which are disposed of by the so-called Magistrates, Deputy Magistrates. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Why so-called?) All the more difficult cases which come before the Sessions Court are practically disposed of by the Jury. There you will find that the verdict of the Jury is supreme. You can no longer question the verdict of the Jury. Even the Judge's opinion does not count for much. If the Judge differs from the verdict of the Jury, he can refer the case to the High Court. It shows that in the administration of justice the utmost limit has been given to the people to give judgment in all important cases. If you take away the cases which are of very great importance in which punishment of more than two years must be awarded and the cases that are actually disposed of for prevention of crime, what remains is practically negligible. These cases are not of so much importance as my friend Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal has asked us to believe. Those cases where the punishment to be awarded is only two years and not more are

disposed of by Magistrates. All the other cases where severer punishment must be awarded are now disposed of by our people, *i.e.*, by the Jury. Can you condemn the system which has given you not only autonomy but absolute freedom? My analysis of the whole thing is that only those cases which are of minor importance and which an ordinary Deputy Magistrate can dispose of are under review. I have already excluded those cases that come under the prevention of crime clause. Some second-class Magistrates deal with most unimportant cases. Then there are cases which are disposed of by first-class Magistrates. I don't believe that they are of such importance that an officer like a Deputy Magistrate cannot dispose of them conscientiously. My friend thinks that the Police is practically ruling there. I can say that there was a time when it was possible for the Police to do some mischief, because that was the time when the whole conditions of service were quite different. The Deputy Magistrates in former times had to pass through 8 ordeals before they came to the topmost place. There were 8 grades and promotion from one to the other required the recommendation of the District Magistrate. Now you ought to know that there is a time-scale of pay where automatically a Deputy Magistrate will get his increased pay up to a certain limit, say up to Rs. 450; there is absolutely no bar. For 10 or 12 years he gets his pay all right without any check. A man who knows that his promotion is not at all dependent upon the opinion of the District Magistrate feels himself absolutely free. If such a man is under control, you cannot say that he is under the control of the Police. You misread the whole thing. Then there is efficiency bar at Rs. 450. But I have never come across any case where a man has been kept on that pay for a period longer than two years. After the second year I have found cent. per cent. cases crossing the first efficiency bar. Then when he reaches Rs. 650 the second efficiency bar comes. You say that the Deputy Magistrates were constantly under the vigilance of the District Magistrates, but they are not so at present. In reply to Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal I admit that our Deputy Magistrates are overworked: and I also admit that besides the criminal work they have to perform multifarious duties. Such persons who have varied experience of life and know the condition of the country very well are, in my opinion, best fitted to pronounce a judgment. Therefore, we find that full freedom has been given to these people to dispose of all the important cases where the punishment extends up to two years. Subdivisional Officers and other Deputy Magistrates and officers of the Crown have got that knowledge and can be entrusted with this work——

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Evidence is not required; knowledge will do?

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: Knowledge of the people in general as well as of the state of affairs in the country, especially of the parties and of the witnesses, is, I think, the first essential in dealing with them. If a person has that knowledge, he is the right sort of person to say whether the witnesses are trustworthy, and to pass a judgment whether the culprit or culprits are really guilty or not. If my friend thinks that it is a wrong policy to entrust our Magistrates with judicial work, and if he thinks that in view of their executive position they cannot have a detached view of things, I believe my friend is labouring under a misapprehension. If he would study how justice is being administered in this province by our Deputy Magistrates, he would certainly agree with me that our Deputy Magistrates are eminently fitted for it and I do not believe——

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: আমরা convinced একেবারে, পুরো-পুরী।

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: I shall now refer to what my friend, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Jalaluddin Ahmad, has said. My friend, the Khan Bahadur, has quoted from what Mr. Rajagopalachari has said, and he is of opinion that in the present condition of the country separation of the judiciary from the executive is not possible. I may inform the House, however, that actually it is separate, though not in its entirety, and that entire separation is not a practicable proposition.

Maulvi ABU HOSSAIN SARKAR: একতরফা মামলাতো ডিসমিস হয়।

The Hon'ble Nawab MUSHARRUFF HOSSAIN, Khan Bahadur: My friend, the Khan Bahadur, has also pointed out certain grievances with regard to the appointment of Government Pleaders and Public Prosecutors. I can tell him that so far as these appointments are concerned, they are not dictated by any political considerations. When we get the nominations of the District Judges and the District Magistrates, I have been maintaining the practice that the first nominee of these people should be appointed. If therefore there is any mistake, the mistake is not mine but theirs. During my Ministry of the last four years, I have not come across any such case, and although I admit that it is possible that such appointments might be given on party considerations, I can assure my friend that it has not happened at least during my time. Therefore, my friend may rest satisfied that we are doing our best to recruit the best men. If my friend can bring to my notice one single instance where the practice which I have just

referred to has not been followed, I should be very glad to discuss the matter with him and I shall be able to convince him that I have done nothing to deserve this condemnation from him.

Then, Sir, Mr. Lakshmi Narayan Biswas has raised a new point that the zamindars are actually working in collaboration with the court peons in suppressing the serving of processes and other things. That is a matter which is absolutely new to me and I could not think that he would raise a point like this. I shall investigate the matter and if there is any truth in it I shall see what can be done.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the motion, and commend my original motion to the acceptance of the House.

The motion of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 71,12,000 for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Nawab Musharruff Hossain, Khan Bahadur, that a sum of Rs. 71,12,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "27—Administration of Justice" was then put and agreed to.

8—Provincial Excise.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRASANNA DEB RAIKUT: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 22,29,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise".

Sir, the policy of Government is the gradual enforcement of total prohibition throughout the province. The upward trend of the excise revenue has given rise to misgivings in the minds of some. I shall therefore explain the position in this regard somewhat closely.

Sir, this increase should not be taken as an indication of greater indulgence by the people in liquors and drugs. The improved economic condition of the people after the slump contributed to some extent to the increase. But the increase has been derived largely at the expense of the traffickers in illicit liquors and drugs. Effective vigilance, stricter control over the licensees, reforms of the Excise rules and enhancement of duty on certain excisable articles are factors which have contributed to the increase in revenue. The increase in revenue due to increased consumption is very small. This will be apparent from the following exposition. Increase in revenue has been most noticeable under country spirit. The following instances will give an indication of the extent to which stricter control has led to increase in revenue. On the change of the licensee of a particular country spirit shop in Calcutta the sales of the shop went up from 110 L.P. gallons to 282 gallons, thus giving an increased revenue of Rs. 29,000 annually.

With the removal of undesirable licensees, even of small shops, sales have been noticed to have gone up by 100 per cent., and occasionally by as much as 300 per cent. On the removal of the licensees the actual sales in the country spirit shops at Gossainhat and Gazole in the district of Malda rose to 121 and 137 L.P. gallons, respectively, during the period from April to September, 1940, as against 21 and 47 L.P. gallons in the same period of the preceding year. When a special patrol party was posted at Manikpur in the district of Howrah where there was a brisk illicit trade in country spirit, the sales in the Manikpur country spirit shop showed an annual increase of 389 L.P. gallons yielding an additional revenue of about Rs. 4,691. The average monthly sale of that shop was 12·2 L.P. gallons in 1938 and after the posting of the special patrol party rose to 41·8 L.P. gallons in 1939 and to 72 L.P. gallons in 1940.

Sir, the number of prosecutions for drunkenness gives an indication of the increase or decrease in the total consumption of liquor. An application of this test shows interesting results. With this increased sale of country spirit from licensed shops there was no increase, but a considerable decrease, in the number of prosecutions for drunkenness. The number of persons prosecuted for drunkenness in the municipal areas was 3,881 in 1939-40 as against 4,242 in the preceding year. In Calcutta where the consumption of country spirit showed an increase of 12,889 L.P. gallons in 1939-40, the number of cases for drunkenness declined by 847 as compared with corresponding figures of 1938-39. I need hardly remind the House that prosecutions for drunkenness are initiated by the Police and not by Excise Officers.

The result of the increased control is noticeable as regards other intoxicating drugs also. The activity of the Police against smugglers in the Machuabazar area and raids against *biriwallas* organised in July, 1939, increased the sales of *charas* from licensed dealers in Calcutta to a great extent. The sale which was 39 seers in July, rose to 50 seers in August, 56 seers in September, 62 seers in October, 65 seers in November and to 80 seers in December. The spectacular rise after the raids shows how steadily sales from licensed shops increase when illicit trade is controlled. In that raid as many as 9 *biriwallas* were detected in one night in the Entally area alone. The increased sale of 30 seers of *charas* gave Government an increased revenue of about Rs. 48,000 per annum.

So far as opium is concerned, though revenue went up from Rs. 34,87,208 in 1938-39 to Rs. 36,19,405 in 1939-40, consumption went down by 7 maunds 5 seers during the period. This increase in revenue in spite of decreased consumption is due to the enhancement of duty and retail price. But increased control bore fruit in this case also. For example, the posting of a patrol party at Pedong near the Tibetan

frontier resulted in the increase in the sales of the Kalimpong opium shop from 23 seers in 1937-38 to 40 seers in 1938-39 and to 50 seers in 1939-40. This increased sale gave an annual extra revenue of Rs. 4,800.

As regards foreign liquor, the increase in the rate of wholesale and retail license fees and the imposition of a fee on the transport of the liquor from Customs Houses by persons other than those holding excise licenses led to an improvement in the revenue from foreign liquor by Rs. 50,000 per annum. The new transport fee, I may explain, was imposed with a two-fold purpose, viz., (*a*) to prevent unfair competition by clubs and societies with the licensees, and (*b*) to bring in income.

The incidence of taxation on *ganja* was Rs. 76·70 per seer in 1935-36 but was raised to Rs. 77·42 per seer in 1939-40. This enhanced taxation brought in an additional revenue of Rs. 23,000 per year. The strict surveillance of the preventive parties in the Naogaon *Ganja Mahal* and bordering areas resulted in the improvement in sales in many licensed shops of *ganja* in the districts of Rajshahi, Bogra and Malda.

Sir, I take this opportunity to point out that if prohibition is to be introduced successfully the first step forward must be the suppression of illicit traffic in liquors and drugs. Otherwise the object of prohibition will be frustrated by the activities of the illicit traffickers. This Government have recognised this and have been taking steps accordingly. In this connection I may mention the activities of the Central Detective Department under the Excise administration of the province. The House will remember that in the wake of the civil disobedience movement, the menace of illicit trade in liquor and drug increased very alarmingly. To cope with the evil, an experimental Department, named the Central Detective Department, was organised in the year 1933-34 on the lines of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Police. The results obtained were so satisfactory that the Department was strengthened in 1935-36 and again in 1936-37 when a Deputy Commissioner was placed at its head in place of a Superintendent of Exice. The number of cases detected by the staff of this department were 1,343, 1,234 and 1,364, respectively, during the last three years, most of them being of an important nature. During the current year this department has been placed on a permanent footing.

Turning to prohibition, which is our accepted policy, the difficulties which confront us in the immediate enforcement of total prohibition were explained on the floor of this House on previous occasions. I do not want to tire the patience of the House by repeating them. I may however remind the House of the fate of prohbition in Bombay and other provinces.

For the purpose of educating the people, vigorous propaganda by official and non-official agencies is necessary. Government have prepared a film on the subject of "Drink Evil" which is now being

exhibited in different parts of the province. The experiment in prohibition having proved a success in Noakhali, Government have decided to extend the experiment to certain parts of the neighbouring districts of Tippera and Chittagong.

Sir, while discussing the Excise Administration of Bengal I cannot but inform the House of the welcome and steady growth of the pharmaceutical industry in the province. The manufacture of *Mritasanjibani* has been growing in the province and has replaced similar stuff of foreign make both in Bengal and outside. Thirteen bonded laboratories in Calcutta and one at Konnagore continue to manufacture medicinal preparations and tinctures. The total quantity of rectified spirit issued to such laboratories and permit-holders during 1939-40 was 212,142 L.P. gallons as against 209,345 L. P. gallons in the previous year. The following statistics of such isues during the last 5 years show the growth of the pharmaceutical industry in this province:—

Year.	L. P. gallons.
1935-36	194,148
1936-37	198,889
1937-38	207,702
1938-39	209,345
1939-40	212,142

Sir, I shall conclude with a few words on two other subjects which have engaged public attention. First, with a view to give public opinion an effective voice in the excise administration, licensing of excise shops and the selection of sites for new shops are being placed more and more under the control of the Licensing Boards, constituted with officials and non-officials having intimate knowledge of the particular localities. These Boards have been working satisfactorily. The Calcutta Licensing Board rejected 76 applications for new shops. The mufassal Licensing Boards also rejected as many as 89 applications for new shops. It may be mentioned in this connection that to prevent the possibility of new shops being opened in places where there is no genuine demand for them, orders have been passed prohibiting the sanctioning of new shops without the previous approval of Government.

Next, with a view to remove the shortage in the number of Muslims and that of members of the Scheduled Castes among the holders of Excise licences, Government have passed orders to the effect that in districts where the representation of the minority communities is disproportionately small, special consideration should be given to their claims in accordance with the ratio fixed for the minority communities in the Communal Ratio of services in selecting new licensees.

Sir, I have given facts and figures regarding the Excise administration with a view to remove any possible misapprehension in the minds of the Hon'ble Members. I commend the demand for the consideration and approval of the House.

Mr. ASIMUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand for Rs. 22,29,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100.

মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব—এই Excise সম্বন্ধে এদেশে Reform হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আজ বিশ বৎসর যাবৎ দেশবাসী একটা ভয়ানক প্রতিবাদ জানিয়ে এসেছে এবং এই সব মাদক দ্রব্য উঠিয়ে দেবার ব্যবস্থা করবার জন্য Assembly এবং Councilএ দাবী জানিয়ে আসছে। এ ব্যাপারটা বাস্তবিক একটা ধর্ম্ম সম্বন্ধীয় ব্যাপার। দুনিয়ায় যত ধর্ম্ম আছে আমি বিশ্বাস করি না কোন ধর্ম্মেই মদ, গাঁজা ইত্যাদি মাদক দ্রব্যের ব্যবহারের বিধান আছে। ব্যক্তিগতভাবে কোন কোন লোক হয়ত এগুলি ব্যবহার কোর্ত্তে পারে, কিন্তু ধর্ম্মের নামে এগুলি ব্যবহার করবার সাহস আছে এ রকম-একটা নিদর্শন কেউ দেখাতে পারে তা বিশ্বাস করি না। এখানে গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে বলা হয় যে এই Exciseএর আয় থেকে প্রায় ১।।০ কোটি টাকা আদায় হয়, তাতে গভর্ণমেণ্টের অন্যান্য কার্য্যের সাহায্য হয়। এই যুক্তি গভর্ণমেণ্টের পক্ষ থেকে দেওয়া হয়। এই গভর্ণমেণ্ট যখন আরম্ভ হয় ২০ বৎসর পূর্ব্বে তখন সাড়ে এগার কোটি টাকা আয় ছিল। কিন্তু এখন আয় পনের কোটি টাকা। কিন্তু তাতে দেশবাসীর অবস্থার বিশেষ পরিবর্ত্তন হোয়েছে বলে মনে করিনা। বরং নানা দিক দিয়ে দেশে নানা প্রকার tax বসিয়ে দেশের অবস্থা নানা দিক দিয়ে খারাপ হোচ্ছে। কাযেই যখন আয়ের কথা তোলা হয় তখন বলা হয় গভর্ণমেণ্ট কি কোরে আয় কোর্ব্বেন। আমার মতে Retrenchment কোরে এবং বড় বড় নানা রকম কোম্পানি খুলে আয় কোর্ত্তে পারেন। Electionএর পরে ঢাকার নবাব সাহেবের বাড়ীতে আমাদের যে Party meeting হোয়েছিল তখন আমরা পরামর্শ দিয়াছিলাম দেশে নানা রকম Industriesএর Mill খোলা হউক। তাহোলে অনেক বেকারের অন্ন সংস্থান হইবে। কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্ট তা করেন নাই। আজও Bata Companyর অফিসের সামনে এবং Bengal Chemical and Bengal Immunity কোম্পানীর আফিসের সামনে প্রত্যহ হাজার হাজার বেকার লোক চাকরির জন্য উপস্থিত হন। Ministerদের সামনেও বহু লোক প্রত্যহ উপস্থিত হন এবং Memberরাও সুপারিশ পত্র লিখে লিখে একেবারে হায়রাণ হোয়ে গেছেন। কিন্তু বড় বড় কর্ম্মচারীদের বেতন কমাবার কোন ব্যবস্থা হয় নাই। অবশ্য আমি স্বীকার কোর্ত্তে বাধ্য যে মন্ত্রীরা পূর্ব্বে যেখানে ৫ হাজার টাকা মাসিক বেতন নিতেন এখন সেখানে তারা ২,৫০০৲ বা ৩,০০০৲ টাকা নিয়ে থাকেন। কিন্তু অনেকে বলেন তাঁরা নানা রকমে সেটা পুরিয়ে নেন। অবশ্য আমি তার প্রমাণ দিতে পারি না। কিন্তু চক্ষে দেখিছি যে তাঁরা ২ হাজার ২।। হাজার টাকা কম নিচ্ছেন। ঐভাবে যে সমস্ত কর্ম্মচারীরা বেশী টাকা মাইনা পান তাদের মাইনে কমিয়ে দেন তাহোলে অনেক টাকা বাঁচ্‌তে পারে। টাকা উপার্জ্জন

করার চেয়ে টাকা সঞ্চয় করবার জ্ঞান থাকা বেশী প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু গভর্ণমেণ্টের সঞ্চয় করবার ও মিতব্যায়ী হওয়ায় ইচ্ছা নাই। গভর্ণমেণ্ট বলেন এটা Huq Ministry বা Muslim Ministry. তাহোলে তাঁরা কি কোরে তাঁদের Excise Policy সমর্থন করেন। কোরান এবং হদিশ যাঁরা বিশ্বাস করেন এবং যাঁরা দাড়ী রেখেছেন এবং Muslim Ministry বোলে দাবী কোরছেন তাঁরা কি কোরে এই Excise Policy সমর্থন করেন এবং এর পক্ষে ভোট দেন এবং কি কোরে লোকের কাছে মুখ দেখান তা আমি বুঝতে পারি না। আমার বন্ধুরা বোলছেন এর দ্বারা গভর্ণমেণ্টের আয় হবে। কিন্তু আমি জিজ্ঞাসা কোর্ত্তে চাই এই টাকাটা কোথা থেকে আসে। আমাদের দেশের যুবকেরা মদ খেয়ে মাতাল হোয়ে বিষয় সম্পত্তি উড়িয়ে দেয়। কত বড় বড় পরিবার নষ্ট হোয়ে গেছে, কত লক্ষ লক্ষ সঞ্চিত টাকা নষ্ট হোয়ে গেছে। কত লোক চরিত্রহীন হোয়েছে। অনুসন্ধান কোরে দেখলে অনেক ভাল ভাল লোকের নাম বাদ যায় নি। আর একটা দিক দিয়ে দেখলেও বোঝা যায় এই জিনিষটা কত খারাপ। এর দ্বারা মানুষের ধর্ম্ম, চরিত্র এবং সততা নষ্ট হয়। যে জিনিষে মাতাল হোতে হয়, যে জিনিষ মানুষকে চরিত্রহীন করে সেই জিনিষ কি কোরে জাতীয়তার নামে চালানো যেতে পারে তা আমি বুঝতে পারি না। (Cries of shame.) এর চেয়ে অধর্ম্ম কি হোতে পারে বুঝিনা। এ সম্বন্ধে নুতন কোরে বক্তৃতা দেওয়ার আর কিছুই নাই। এটা ধর্ম্মের কথা, কোরাণের কথা, হাদিশের কথা। এই সব সুন্দর কোরে বলবার আর কিছু নেই। প্রত্যেক বারেই এই জিনিষটার উপর ভোট হয়। আমার বন্ধুদের ও গভর্ণমেণ্টের বাস্তবিকই যদি সদিচ্ছা ও সরলতা থাকতো তাহোলে এই জিনিষটা অনায়াসে উঠিয়ে দিতে পার্ত্তেন। নোয়াখালির মত ছোট একটি জেলায় যেখানে তামাক পর্য্যন্ত লোকে খুব কম খায় সেই জিলায় Prohibitionএর ব্যবস্থা হোয়েছে। কিন্তু সেখানেও তা successful হোচ্ছেনা। কিন্তু যখন meeting বন্ধ কোর্ত্তে হয়, যখন Ordinance জারী কোর্ত্তে হয়, যখন আমাদের দলকে দমন কোর্ত্তে হয়, যখন জেলে দিতে হয় তখন অছিলার অভাব হয় না। তখন বেশী সময় লাগে না। উপকার করবার বেলায় যত আলস্য আসে, অনিষ্ট করবার বেলায় সময় লাগে না। কয় বৎসরে এই সব শেষ হবে জানি না। কবে সারা বাংলাদেশে Prohibition হবে জানি না। এ পর্য্যন্ত একটা জেলায় শেষ হয় নি। ২৮ টি জেলা কবে শেষ হবে। এই গভর্ণমেণ্টের জীবনে, মাননীয় মন্ত্রীদের জীবনে হবার সম্ভবনা নেই। এখন কথা হোচ্ছে যে ভাবে খাজনা কমাবার প্রস্তাব ঝুলিয়ে রাখা হোয়েছে, জমিদারী উঠিয়ে দেবার প্রস্তাব ঝুলিয়ে রাখা হোয়েছে, চান্দিনা সত্ব দেবার প্রশ্ন ঝুলিয়ে রাখা হোয়েছে এটাও ঐ সঙ্গে ঝুলিয়ে রাখা হোয়েছে। অন্যদিকে কয়েকটি tax কোরে লোককে বিপন্ন কোরতে এবং লোকের উপর জুলুম কোরতে গভর্ণমেণ্ট একটুও ইতস্ততঃ করেন নি; এবং ভ্রমেও জনসাধারণের স্বার্থের দিকে, ধর্ম্মের দিকে, সততা এবং সাধুতার দিকে দৃষ্টিপাত করেন নাই। এই বোলে আমি এই প্রস্তাবটি উপস্থিত কোরছি।

Dr. GOBINDA CHANDRA BHOWMICK: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 22,29,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100.

এই বৎসর Excise বাজেটে আমরা দেখতে পাচ্ছি দশ লক্ষ টাকা আয় বেড়েছে দুঃখের বিষয় Provincial Autonomy সুরু হওয়ার পর থেকে আমাদের দেশে নৈতিক অবস্থা ক্রমশঃ খারাপের দিকে যাচ্ছে। আড়াই বৎসর পূর্ব্বে Bombay প্রভৃতি প্রদেশে আইন কোরে Prohibition করবার চেষ্টা করা হোয়েছিল এবং তা কৃত-কার্য্যও হোয়েছিল। Madrasএর সালেম Districtএর যেখানে ২৫ লক্ষ লোকের বাস সেখানে শ্রীযুক্ত রাজা গোপালাচারী Prohibition কোরে সেখান থেকে তাড়ী উঠিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন। সেখানে ২৫ লক্ষ লোকের মধ্যে প্রায় ৭ লক্ষ লোক তাড়ী খেতো; তাতে Governmentএর আয় কমে গিয়েছিল ১৩ লক্ষ টাকা। আমাদের Governmentও নামে মাত্র নোয়াখালিতে Prohibition আরম্ভ কোরেছিলেন তাতে আয় কমে গিয়েছিল হাজার টাকা। আমাদের বাংলা Governmentএর Exciseএর আয় Budget থেকে দেখা যাচ্ছে এক কোটী ৭৫ লক্ষ টাকা। এই টাকা মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম প্রভৃতি বিক্রয় কোরে আদায় হয়। এগুলি অত্যন্ত জঘন্য জিনিষ। মদের অপকারিতা কি তাহা সকলেই জানেন। মদ খেয়ে দেশের লোক উৎসন্নে গিয়েছে। গাঁজা, আফিম, গুলি খেয়ে দেশের লোক নির্জীব হোয়েছে। এইসব জিনিষের আমাদের Medical Scienceএ কিছু কিছু আবশ্যকতা আছে। কিন্তু নৈতিক জীবনে এর কোন দাম নেই। আমাদের দেশের যেরূপ জল বায়ু তাতে মদ, আফিম এবং গাঁজার কিছু প্রয়োজন হয় না। সুতরাং জাতির যদি সত্যিকারের উন্নতি কোরতে হয় তাহা হইলে দেশ থেকে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম দূর করে দেওয়া দরকার। Government আজ Nation-buildingএর কথা বলেন। এইসব জিনিষ এখান থেকে দূর না কোরলে Nation-building হবে না। আমরা পরাধীন তার কারণ আমরা দুর্ব্বল। আমাদের নৈতিক অবস্থা অত্যন্ত খারাপ। এই অবস্থার মধ্যে থেকে আমরা বুঝতেই পারি না যে, আমরা পরাধীন। কাজেই আমাদের Government-এর সর্ব্বপ্রধান কর্ত্তব্য লোকের চেতনা জাগ্রত কোরে মনুষত্বের বৃদ্ধি করা। তা না কোরে লোকে যাতে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম খান তার ব্যবস্থা কোরছেন। আজ তাঁরা আয়ের মমতা ছাড়তে পারছেন না। Bombayতে Prohibition successful হোয়েছিল। এখানেও যদি Congress Government থাকতো তাহ'লে এই অবস্থা হোত না। Prohibitionএর নামে তাঁরা একটা ভাঁওতা দিচ্ছেন বাস্তবিক কার্য্য কিছু কোরছেন না এবং করবার আশাও দেখতে পাচ্ছি না। কারণ, এই Governmentএর এই বৎসরে দেখছি এক কোটী ৩৫ লক্ষ টাকা ঘাটতি হোয়েছে এ টাকাটা চাই। সে tax থেকে আসুক বা মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম থেকে আসুক। লোকে উৎসন্ন যাক, খেতে পাক বা না পাক তা দেখবার দরকার নেই। Industrial areaতে যেখানে লোকে রোজগার করে দশ বার আনা, সেই দশ বারো আনা তারা সন্ধ্যাবেলায় মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম খেয়ে উড়িয়ে দেয়। তাদের ছেলেপিলেরা খেতে পায় কি না পায় মন্ত্রিমণ্ডলী তা দেখেন না। Industrial areaতে শ্রমিকরা যাতে ভাল খেতে পায় তার ব্যবস্থা এবং মদের দোকান উঠিয়ে দেবার ব্যবস্থা দরকার। কিন্তু এ সম্পর্কে তাঁরা সম্পূর্ণ অনিচ্ছুক এবং তা কিছুতেই কোরবেন না।

আমাদের শরীরের দিক দিয়েও দেখতে পাই মদের effect কত খারাপ। মদ খেলে লোকে মাতাল হয় এবং দেহে নানারূপ ব্যাধির সৃষ্টি হয়। কাজেই যাতে শারীরিক, মানষিক, নৈতিক এবং সামাজিক কল্যাণ হয় না এমন জিনিষের প্রশ্রয় দেওয়া উচিত নয়। আজ আমরা খেতে পাই না। আমাদের ভাতের সংস্থান নেই। আমাদের পল্লীগ্রামের অবস্থা যা দেখেছি যে, যারা একবার মদ খেতে সুরু করে তারা সে নেশা কিছুতেই ছাড়তে পারে না। তারা ঘটী বাটি বিক্রী কোরে এমন কি চুরী কোরেও মদ, আফিম, গাঁজা খায়। এই অভ্যাসের ফলে গাঁয়ে চোরাই মদ তৈরী হোচ্ছে। Government illicit distillation বন্ধ করবার চেষ্টা কোরছেন। Government যদি আগে মদ উঠিয়ে দিতেন এবং বোলতেন আমরা দেশকে শুকনো কোরবো—তোমরা আর মদ, গাঁজা খেতে পারবে না, এই রকম যদি কোরতেন তাহ'লে illicit distillation বন্ধ করা সম্ভব হোত। যারা মদ খেতে শিখেছে তারা ধান, গুড়, মহুয়া প্রভৃতি থেকে মদ চোলাই কোরছে। এর ফলে সমাজ এমন অবস্থায় এসেছে যাতে গাঁয়ে বাস করা কঠিন হোয়েছে। কাজেই Prohibition should be complete. তাতে দেশের যে পরিমাণই ক্ষতি হউক না কেন আমরা যে জল বায়ুতে বাস করি তাতে মদ না খেলে কিছু আসে যায় না। আজ Government নিজের অস্তিত্ব বজায় রাখবার জন্য যে step নিয়েছেন সেটা আদৌ ভাল নয়। আমার বন্ধু বোলেছেন এই জিনিষটার হিন্দু ধর্ম্মে, মুসলমান ধর্ম্মে বা কোন ধর্ম্মেই সমর্থন পাওয়া যায় না। বাংলায় যে Coalition দল তাতে মুসলমানের সংখ্যাই বেশী, আমাদের প্রধান মন্ত্রী সাহেবও মুসলমান। কিন্তু তাঁরা এই যে ধর্ম্মের নামে অধর্ম্ম চালিয়ে যাচ্ছেন এবং এর থেকে টাকা পাবার ব্যবস্থা কোচ্ছেন এটা একটা ভাববার জিনিষ। যাঁরা মুসলমান বলে গর্ব্ব করেন তাঁরা কেন আজ Bengalএ complete prohibition কোচ্ছেন না। তাহ'লে বুঝতাম তাঁদের সত্যিকারের ধর্ম্ম এবং জাতি আছে। অথচ যখন হিন্দু মুসলমান Question আসে তখন বলেন আমরা মুসলমান, আমাদের ধর্ম্ম, আমাদের culture নষ্ট হোচ্ছে—"Islam in danger." যদি সত্যই Islam in danger হয়, তাহ'লে দেশের লোকের চরিত্র ভাল কোরতে হবে। কাজেই আশা করি যে, আমাদের Premier যে বিষয়টী (Prohibition) হিন্দু এবং মুসলমান সভ্যগণ support কোরেছেন তার সম্বন্ধে একমত হবেন এবং অন্যান্য Congress প্রদেশে Ministerরা যা কোরেছেন, নিজেদের মাইনে কমিয়ে, ও departmentএর খরচ কমিয়ে Government চালানোর যে রকম ব্যবস্থা কোরেছেন সেই রকম করুন। আজ যদি আমরা Sales Taxএর টাকা Prohibitionএর কাজেতে লাগাতাম তাহ'লে এতটা দুঃখ হোত না।

Mr. DAMBER SINGH GURUNG: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the policy of the Government in the Excise Department has not been very satisfactory. Every year the Government say that their policy is, firstly, to have total prohibition, and, secondly, to have maximum of revenue with minimum of consumption, but so far they have not been able to do either of the two. As regards the total prohibition, they started

with the district of Noakhali which used to yield a revenue of only Rs. 4,000 out of the total revenue of 157 lakhs of rupees of the province. One would be inclined to say that it is nothing but farce. As for the other policy both the revenue and the consumption are on the increase. Just before the present popular Government took over charge of the province the total revenue under this head was only 134 lakhs but on the very first year of their regime this figure shot up to 157 lakhs of rupees and the consumption also increased on account of the introduction of cheaper quality of liquor.

Total prohibtion, though quite possible and would have been the best thing, is not very desirable and I doubt very much whether the present Ministry will ever achieve this. Firstly, the question of revenue, *i.e.*, 157 lakhs of rupees crops in. Unless and until some ways and means are devised to raise this amount from some other source it is not advisable to have total prohibition. Secondly, we have to think of the comfort and luxury of the people who can afford to drink, I mean the rich people. They have plenty of money. If they are asked to do some philanthropic work and give something in charity or contribute something towards nation-building work, they will never give, so let them drink, dance and be merry to their hearts content and thereby contribute something at least indirectly towards the nation-building works. Why should we have prohibition for these people? We want prohibition for the poor people. We want to save the poorer class of people who cannot afford to have even two square meals a day. I do not think that there is anybody in this House who would even for a moment say that these European gentlemen who are sitting just in front of me should be saved from being ruined by drink. They can afford to drink, so let them have it. It is for the poor people that we have to think. So the idea of total prohibition which cannot be achieved should be given up and the Government should try to find out some other means by which the Excise revenue will be intact and at the same time the poorer class of people will be saved from being ruined. It is not very difficult to do that as there is already the declared policy of the Government to have maximum of revenue with minimum of consumption. If the Government are really very sincere in their desire to save the poorer class of people they should take courage in both hands and implement this policy. It is not very difficult to do this. The price of all kinds of liquor and drugs should be sufficiently raised so that it may be beyond the reach of the pocket of poor people. Let only the good quality liquor be supplied and let the price be not less than Rs. 3 per bottle. The poor class of people cannot buy it and the rich people, who can afford let them do so. The price of the foreign liquor should be increased by at least 100 per cent. We are having so many taxes; sales tax, motor spirit tax, amusement tax, etc., etc. Why should we not have drink tax? Let the Maharajas, Rajas, Nawabs, Zamindars, Europeans and others who can afford,

contribute to the Excise revenue indirectly so as to compensate the loss that will be incurred in depriving the poor class of people of the drink. If the Government be bold enough to do this it will be something like killing not only two birds but three birds with one stone; firstly, the main thing the revenue will be intact; secondly, the poorer class of people will be saved, and, lastly, those who can afford and those who are against prohibition will be satisfied. If the Government cannot do even this much, they cannot be called other than, if it is not unparliamentary to say, hypocrites.

Now, Sir, just a few words regarding the policy of the Government in the settlement of the Excise shops. Most of the shops have been given to the non-provincial men—the Biharis. Though these people resort to various dishonest means such as over-charge, dilution, short measure, etc., still the Government cannot remove them because the question of money predominates specially in this department. In reply to a letter from the Young Men's Muslim Association, the Commissioner of Excise writes to say that the claims of any community cannot be considered in the settlement of the Excise shops unless that community contributes at least 50 per cent. of the Excise revenue. If this principle is to be followed, then why the claims of the hillmen in the district of Darjeeling who contribute more than 90 per cent. of the Excise revenue are not considered and the Biharis who contribute not even 5 per cent. of the revenue have been given preference. I think the principle to be followed in this case is the money. Whoever can fill the pocket of the Excise officials can have the first claim.

As regards the administration of the department, I was an Excise vendor for about three years and I know how it is being carried specially the relation between the vendor and the officials. The vendors have to pay a certain fixed amount monthly to the officials from top to bottom, otherwise the vendors are harassed every now and then. If they are paid according to their demand one can do whatever one likes and they will shut their eyes. It is the Excise officials who encourage —rather compel—the vendors to resort to dishonest means as they have to make the extra income for payment to the officials. In Darjeeling and Kalimpong it is an open secret that the vendors charge 2 annas extra per bottle. The officials from top to bottom know this but their mouths have been shut with silver plugs. I once caught the vendor of Kalimpong country spirit shop charging 4 annas extra for one bottle. The vendor wanted to refund when I challenged. The evidence of four witnesses were taken by the Excise Sub-Inspector immediately after the occurrence and the matter was reported. After some months I got a letter from the Commissioner saying that as I had been agitating against the Excise shops my statement must be corroborated by some other officials. As regards the officials I have already stated, how their mouths are shut.

One more thing and then I have finished. Sir, it is regarding how the subordinate officers have to work and carry out the orders. We have one very honest and strict officer in Darjeeling. Though he is very senior and has got good records to his credit his honesty stood on the way and he was not given charge of any circle, for his Boss would be deprived of his share from the vendors. He was once in August, 1939, transferred to the Kalimpong circle but one visit from the vendor to the Superintendent was sufficient to have that order cancelled. Only about two months ago he has been transferred to Kalimpong. On his arrival he began to watch the sale throughout the day on *hat* days. He could do that only for two *hat* days I think, when the vendor being deprived of that 2 annas extra income per bottle ran to Darjeeling and the Superintendent in his turn motored to Kalimpong and gave ultimatum to the officer either to follow what his predecessor was doing, *i.e.*, to allow the vendor to have his two annas extra or to leave the district. Poor fellow who had been in the plains for a long time could not think of going down to the plains again. So the vendor is having a smooth sail now. Such is the condition. After I say all this in this House I apprehend this gentleman will be put to trouble and may even be transferred. Let the Government charge even two rupees extra per bottle but why these vendors who get at least 8 to 9 hundred rupees net profit per month from the commission in each of the Darjeeling Sadar and Kalimpong shops should be allowed to do whatever they like. I request the Government to look into all these things.

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: I would want to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister to one question only and that is a very important question which does not affect the revenue receipt of the Government. The policy of Government as regards the selection of sites is very objectionable. It should be the policy of Government, the popular Government, to see that sites are not selected near any educational institution and the Ministry should issue a circular from Writers' Buildings to this effect to all the districts. I know that in the district of Malda in a village called Araidanga from which I come there was an opium and *ganja* shop near a school and on bringing this fact to the notice of the Superintendent of Excise, Malda, it was shifted, but it was again shifted to a place which was close to another school. There are many places in the villages, and there are many markets to which these shops could be shifted. But I do not know why it should not be laid down that a site should not be selected within the radius of one-fourth of a mile near any educational institution. I hope all the members will agree to this proposal of mine. I am not bringing forward any cut motion nor do I bring in any censure motion against the Ministry. I only want to draw the attention of the Ministry to this very important question. I hope they will not sleep

over it. I would request the Hon'ble Minister to see that a circular is immediately issued to all the District Officers that shops should be removed as far as possible especially where shops are not located in any *pucca* buildings. Shops which may be located in thatched houses or in any rented houses can be shifted very easily. I hope the Hon'ble Minister will take my suggestion into consideration and do the needful.

Mr. BANKU BEHARY MANDAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to say a few words as to the policy of the Government with regard to the settlement of licences of excise shops. Before the introduction of the fixed fee system the licences of the excise shops were settled by auction and the highest bidders used to get the licences. The members of the Suri community and a few Kalwars were the only bidders during that time. Many families were ruined due to this reckless bidding though the Government revenue was highly increased due to rival bidding.

After the introduction of the present fixed fee system in the place of auction system the excise shops became lucrative and the Government adopted the policy of settling shops with educated *bhadraloks* ignoring the claims of the members of the community who suffered severe losses during the auction system and who were considered untouchable in the society for this wine business.

As to the settlement of *pachwai* shops the claims of a certain section of the Scheduled Caste community who are experts in the manufacture of *pachwai* should be recognised by the Government. The members of the other community either caste Hindus or Muhammadans who have no knowledge of this *pachwai* business and who do not take part in the sale and sit idle at a distance from the sale counter with handkerchiefs in their nose are being given the *pachwai* licences by the Government ignoring the claims of the expert community. They are to take the help of this community in manufacturing and in the management of their shops. They exploit the Scheduled Caste people who are now servants under them though they had shops previously. I must let you know, Sir, that in the district of Midnapur there are 227 *pachwai* shops out of which 213 are settled under the auction system and 14 are under the fixed fee system. You will not find a single so-called caste Hindu or Muhammadan bidding a *pachwai* shop in the auction system but out of the 14 shops under the fixed fee system 8 or 9 shops have been settled with caste Hindu people.

I request the Government to adopt a policy of settling *pachwai* shops at least preferably with the members of this Scheduled Caste community who are experts in *pachwai* manufacture.

Now, Sir, I want to say a few words with regard to the prohibition which has been advocated by so many of my friends.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the revenue received from the provincial excise is one crore seventy-five lakhs (Rs. 1,75,00,000) whereas the land revenue is 3 crores 67 lakhs and 18 thousand (Rs. 3,67,18,000). The excise revenue is about half of land revenue.

A Government with a deficit budget of about one crore and thirty lakhs cannot ignore this income. So total prohibition will not be possible by the present Government. It should be gradual and cautious, we should not rush in.

Moreover, we should watch the results of other provinces where the Prohibition has been introduced. The legal aspect of the thing should also be considered. The Bombay and Madras High Courts have declared the Prohibition of those provinces *ultra vires*.

I doubt, Sir, whether the Governments who have introduced Prohibition have become successful. As to the Bihar Province which borders Bengal my first-hand information is that the Prohibition officers have not been able to check illicit distillation and illicit manufacture. Regular sales of illicit liquor have been going on.

Introduction of 75 (per cent.) U. P. liquor, a cheap liquor, was a tremendous check on illicit distillation of liquor. Most of the consumers who used to take their supply from illicit sources began to take their supply from licensed shops because the difference in price of the licit and illicit spirit was not worth the risk of breaking the law with its penal consequences. Illicit distillation and import of outstill liquor from outside Bengal got a definite check. In the Asansol subdivision, from which place I have come, illicit import of outstill liquor from Bihar had become a menace to Government revenue. With the introduction of 75 (per cent.) U. P. liquor there was an immediate rise in the consumption in the shops adjoining the border thus proving that previously many of the consumers took their supply of out-still liquor from Bihar. This sudden rise also showed that there was a demand of low strength of liquor and it did not create a demand. It did not increase drunkenness.

Mr. SYED AHMED KHAN : মাননীয় সভাপতি মহোদয়, Excise Departmentএর আলোচনা প্রসঙ্গে এই Houseএ যাঁরা বক্তৃতা দিয়েছেন তাঁরা সকলেই এই কথা বোলেছেন যে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম, তাড়ি প্রভৃতি দেশের সর্ব্বনাশের মূল। দেশের জনসাধারণের ধর্ম্ম, কর্ম্ম, স্বাস্থ্য, সভ্যতা, এই মদ, গাঁজা, তাড়ি, আফিমের দ্বারা সর্ব্বনাশের পথে চলেছে। ইস্‌লাম ধর্ম্মানুসারে যত প্রকারের পাপ আছে তন্মধ্যে শ্রেষ্ঠ পাপ মদ খাওয়া। ইস্‌লাম ধর্ম্মে এমন ব্যবস্থা আছে যে এক বিন্দু মদ খাওয়া দূরের কথা, শরীরের কোন স্থানে মদ পড়িলে সেটা কেটে ফেলতে হবে নতুবা মহা পাপ হবে। এই মদকে মুসলমান মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী এবং Coalition পার্টির মুসলমান বন্ধুগণ কি কোরে সমর্থন কোরতে পারেন তা আমি জানি না। Sir, আমার মতে যে মানুষ মদ খায়

তার ধর্ম্ম বিবেক সমস্ত নষ্ট হোয়ে যায়। সেই মানুষ পাপ কার্য্যে লিপ্ত থাকে। সেই জন্যই Prostitute quarterএ এই সব মানুষ প্রায় পাপ কার্য্যে লিপ্ত থাকে। মদের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে Prostitute quarterও উঠিয়ে দেওয়া উচিত। আমাদের Ministerরা এবং Coalition memberরা এদিকে অগ্রসর হ'ন না। এই সম্পর্কে আমার একটা কথা মনে পড়লো। স্বদেশীযুগে বিলাতি লবণ এবং বিলাতি কাপড় উঠিয়ে দেবার জন্য এক জায়গায় বক্তৃতা হোচ্ছিল—একজন লোক বক্তৃতা শুনে ভয়ঙ্কর কাঁদতে আরম্ভ কোরে দিলো, সকলে মনে কোরলো বক্তৃতায় কাজ হোয়েছে, সকলেই হাত তুলে প্রতিজ্ঞা কোরলে বিলাতি লবণ ও কাপড় কেউ কিনবে না। খানিক-পরে দেখা গেলো সেই লোকটা এক বস্তা বিলাতি লবণ মাথায় কোরে বাড়ীতে চোলেছে। তাকে যখন জিজ্ঞাসা করা হোল সে ব্যস্ত সমস্ত হোয়ে পালিয়ে গেলো। মন্ত্রীমহোদয়রা এবং Coalition partyর memberরা ভোটারদের কাছে বোলেছিলেন—দেশ থেকে আমরা অপকর্ম্ম দূর কোরবো, মদ খাওয়া দূর কোরবো, খাজনা কমাবো। কিন্তু এখন ওঁনারা এই সব জিনিষ আরও বিশেষ করে জনসাধারণের ঘাড়ে চাপাচ্ছেন। এখন কি, মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম খাওয়া উঠিয়ে দেওয়া যায় তারা বলে থাকেন? না, না, তাহলে Ministerরা কি খাবে। (Laughter.) ওঁনারা বোলেন ওঁনারা Moslem Leagueএর সমর্থক, Moslem জাতীয়তার সমর্থক। ইস্‌লাম ধর্ম্মে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম সম্পূর্ণ হারাম বলা হোয়েছে। ইতিমধ্যে কোন কোন জেলায়, যেমন নোয়াখালিতে বলা হোচ্ছে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম বন্ধ করা হোচ্ছে। নোয়াখালির লোকেরা তামাক খাওয়াকে পাপ বোলে মনে করে, অথচ মাওলানা, মৌলবী ও পীর নামধারী নোয়াখালির memberরা কি কোরে মদ, গাঁজা, আফিম খাওয়াটা সমর্থন কোরতে পারে তা আমি বুঝতে পারি না। এই সম্বন্ধে গত চার বৎসর ধরে বহুবার আলোচনা হোয়েছে, কিন্তু আজ পর্য্যন্ত এগুলি উঠিয়ে দেবার কোন বন্দোবস্ত হয় নি। আরো শুনা যায় কুত্তা দৌড়ের ব্যবস্থা হোচ্ছে।

Mr. SPEAKER : এখন কুত্তা ছেড়ে দিন, মদ সম্বন্ধে কথা বলুন।

Mr. SYED AHMED KHAN : আমি Coalition partyর memberদের অনুরোধ কোরছি—মদ, গাঁজা, আফিমের বিরুদ্ধে vote দিয়ে দেখিয়ে দিন তাঁরা এসব চান না। আপনারা দেখতে পাচ্ছেন ঢাকায় যে riot হোচ্ছে তা তাড়িখানা, মদখানা থেকে আরম্ভ হোয়েছে। লোকে যখন মদ, তাড়ি খায় তখন হিতাহিত জ্ঞানশূন্য হোয়ে পড়ে। তখন তারা দাঙ্গাহাঙ্গামা বাঁধাইয়া দেয়।

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. SYED AHMED KHAN : সুতরাং মদ, গাঁজা, তাড়ি ত্যাগ না কোরতে পারলে এদেশ থেকে গুণ্ডামী, নষ্টামী যাবে না এবং সমাজ, সভ্যতা কিছুই রক্ষা পাবে না।

The Hon'ble Mr. PRASANNA DEB RAIKUT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, much has been said by different speakers on this important question of prohibition, but may I ask whether any one can suggest in all seriousness that the introduction of prohibition in this province is a feasible and practical proposition at the present moment? I shall only enumerate some of the reasons why it is not feasible. First of all, Sir, the time is not ripe for its introduction; the people are not educated enough to agree to the policy of prohibition. There are different castes, creeds and communities in Bengal; there are the Chinese, the Burmese, the Rajbansis, the Madrassis, the Paharias, and the aboriginals. Amongst this heterogeneous elements, it is impossible to introduce prohibition. Then, Sir, in the provinces where prohibition has been partially introduced, what do we find? You will find that the policy has failed everywhere——

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: Even in Madras?

The Hon'ble Mr. PRASANNA DEB RAIKUT: Yes; and why? Because this policy of prohibition has increased the number of illicit traffickers in each of those provinces. In Madras it has risen by 189 per cent.; in the United Provinces by 403 per cent.; and so on. There are other implications also which have to be considered in this connection. There are certain aboriginal sects amongst whom it is impossible to introduce prohibition. Nature has provided for them intoxicating articles in abundance and they have got peculiar religious and social customs which enjoin that these people should indulge in intoxicating drugs and drinks. Such is the case with the Orangs and Sonthals. Do you think that it would be a practicable proposition to prohibit the drinking of *pachwai* amongst these peoples? So far as liquors are concerned, prohibition has failed in those provinces which introduced it. It has failed in respect of *ganja* in Madras, and in Sind in respect of *charas*. Then, Sir, there was a case in Bombay on this question of prohibition and as such there is legal difficulty in introducing prohibition.

I shall now come to the question of revenues derived from Excise. In comparison with the other provinces the revenues derived in Bengal is much less and that proves that the people of Bengal are less addicted to drinks and drugs than the people of the other provinces.

Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: We know that.

The Hon'ble Mr. PRASANNA DEB RAIKUT: You know that, but you always attack the Excise policy of Government.

Then, Sir, I shall quote the figures of Excise Revenues of the different provinces in India. The revenues of Bengal are Rs. 1,16,28,155; of Bombay, Rs. 1,99,15,213; of Madras,

Rs. 3,38,16,414. As regards *per capita* Excise revenue, Bengal spends five annas and four pies; Bombay spends one rupee one anna and ten pies; Madras spends twelve annas and three pies; Bihar five annas and eleven pies and the Central Provinces and Berar spend six annas and six pies. The average consumption per 100 men is as follows:—

Country spirit.

	Gallons.
Bengal	1·18
Madras	1·92
Bombay	3·95

Opium.

	Seer.
Bengal	·05
Madras	·05
Bombay	·06

Now, coming to average taxations per gallon or seer in different provinces what do we find? The position as regards country spirit is—

Bengal	9·39
Madras	13·15
Bombay	12·21
U. P.	16·19
C. P.	6·17
Bihar	4·78
Assam	6·73

(The Hon'ble Minister having reached his time-limit resumed his seat.)

The motions of Mr. Asimuddin Ahmed and Dr. Gobinda Chandra Bhowmik that the demand of Rs. 22,29,000 for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" be reduced by Rs. 100 were then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—31.

Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Abu Hossain Sarkar, Maulvi.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Bhowmik, Dr. Gobindra Chandra.
Biswas, Mr. Sarendra Nath.
Chaudhuri, Rai Narendra Nath.
Das Gupta, Babu Khagendra Nath.
Datta Mazumder, Mr. Niharendu.
Emdadul Haque, Kazi.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.

Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Jalaluddin Hashemy, Mr. Syed.
Jonab Ali Majumdar, Maulvi.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Jogendra Nath.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Nasher Ali, Mr. Syed.
Pramanik, Mr. Tarinicharan.
Ramiuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr. M.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Wallur Rahman, Maulvi.

NOES—74.

Abdul Hamid, Mr. A. M.
Abdul Karim, Mr.
Abdul Latif Biswas, Maulvi.
Abdul Majid, Mr. Syed.
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Raschid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahdur Maulvi S.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Shah.
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Abul Hosain Ahmed, Mr.
Abul Quasem, Maulvi.
Ahmed Ali Mridha, Maulvi.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Ashrafali, Mr. M.
Asiad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Bell-Hart, Miss P. B.
Birkmyre, Sir Henry, Bart.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Dass, Babu Debendra Nath.
Edbar, Mr. Upendranath.
Farhad Raza Chowdhury, Mr. M.
Farhut Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Fazlur Rahman, Mr. (Dacca).
Gladding, Mr. D.
Gurung, Mr. Damber Singh.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Mandal, Mr. Banku Behari.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Masud Ali Khan Panni, Al-Hadj Maulvi.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Moslem Ali Mollah, Maulvi M.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Afzal, Khan Bahadur Maulvi Syed.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mullick, Mr. Pulin Behary.
Musharruff Hossain, the Hon'ble Nawab, Khan Bahadur.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Raikut, the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Sassoon, Mr. R. M.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Sinclair, Mr. J. F.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Smith, Mr. H. Brabant.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Steven, Mr. J. W. R.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M.
Wordsworth, Mr. W. C.
Yousuf Mirza.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

The Ayes being 31 and the Noes 74, the motions were lost.

The motion of the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb Raikut that a sum of Rs. 22,29,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "8—Provincial Excise" was then put and agreed to.

Adjournment.

The House was adjourned at 12-10 p.m. till 4-45 p.m. on Monday, the 24th March, 1941, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly assembled under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935.

THE ASSEMBLY met in the Assembly House, Calcutta, on Monday, the 24th March, 1941, at 4-45 p.m.

Present:

Mr. Speaker (the Hon'ble Sir MUHAMMAD AZIZUL HAQUE, C.I.E., Khan Bahadur) in the Chair, 7 Hon'ble Ministers and 172 members.

STARRED QUESTIONS

(to which oral answers were given)

Fishery Enquiries.

***186. Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QUADIR:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Agriculture and Industries Department be pleased to state—

(*i*) how many Fishery Enquiries were held during the last 40 years;

(*ii*) who were the officers appointed or deputed to make such enquiries;

(*iii*) who were the experts appointed by the Government and from where they were brought; and

(*iv*) what was the expenditure incurred by the Government for each enquiry (to be shown separately)?

(*b*) Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to lay on the table copies of the reports of those enquiries and the decision of Government, if any, thereon?

MINISTER in charge of the AGRICULTURE and INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan): (*a*) (*i*) Six.

(*ii*) Sir (then Mr.) K. G. Gupta, Messrs. K. C. De and T. Southwell, Dr. J. T. Jenkins, Mr. A. Ahmad and Dr. M. R. Naidu.

(*iii*) All the officers appointed to hold the enquiries were officers of this Government except Dr. Naidu who was brought from Madras.

(*iv*) The expenditure incurred on the enquiry held by Dr. Naidu was Rs.19,349. Information regarding the expenditure incurred in connection with the other enquiries which were held long ago is not readily available.

(*b*) Copies of the reports of Messrs. K. G. Gupta, K. C. De and Dr. Naidu are placed on the Library table. No spare copies of the reports of Messrs. Southwell and Ahmad and Dr. Jenkins are available. The volume containing the report of Mr. K. G. Gupta laid on the table contains the Government resolution thereon. As a result of the enquiries held by Messrs. Gupta, De, Ahmad and Dr. Jenkins, a joint Department of the Fisheries for the Provinces of Bengal and Bihar and Orissa, was established in 1912. Mr. Southwell's report resulted in the separation of the Fishery Department of Bengal from that of Bihar and Orissa and the constitution of an independent Fishery Department with a Director of its own. On the basis of Dr. Naidu's report, it is in contemplation to revive the Department of Fisheries which was abolished on the recommendation of the Retrenchment Committee of 1923, with a Director of Fisheries and a nucleus staff under him.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the report was submitted by Dr. Naidu?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I suppose in 1939.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he has distributed the report amongst the members of the Assembly?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: No, Sir.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether action will be taken on the report during the year 1941-42?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I do not think that will be possible. The first step that we are going to take is to set up a Fishery Department, and when we have set up the department, the question how far we can give effect to the recommendation of Dr. Naidu will be considered.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a private company is taking advantage of the report of Dr. Naidu, because the Government is not going to do anything?

The Hon'ble Mr TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I am very glad to learn that a private company is going to take advantage of the report of Dr. Naidu. The more the report is taken advantage of the better it is for Bengal.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: I want to know whether the Hon'ble Minister is aware of that?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: No; I am not aware of that.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether he thinks that the improvement of fisheries in Bengal is urgently necessary?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: That is not a matter of opinion, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point?

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: My point is that in 1923 the department was abolished, and now it is 1940. I want to know whether the Government of Bengal still do not think it necessary to improve the fishery.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now you can ask your question.

Mr. CHARU CHANDRA ROY: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the present Cabinet thinks that the improvement of fisheries is the most important question now facing Bengal and whether it wants to expedite it?

Mr. SPEAKER: You may answer the last question, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan.

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: Government are more anxious than anybody else to improve the fisheries.

Khan Bahadur FAZLUL QUADIR: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether Government are ready to distribute the report of Dr. Naidu amongst the members before any action is taken?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I think that the report will be available.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether on the instruction of the Government of Bengal a two-storied building has been erected within Matlab police-station to start a fishery school?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: I do not know.

Mr. SHAHEDALI: Is the Hon'ble Minister aware that ex-Finance Minister Mr. N. R. Sarker laid the foundation stone of that particular school?

The Hon'ble Mr. TAMIZUDDIN KHAN: The honourable member seems to know more than I do.

Death of two prisoners in Dinajpur Jail.

*187. **Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU:** (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Home (Jails) Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Rupeshwar Barman and Maniram Barman, two convict prisoners, died in the Dinajpur Jail recently in January last?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative. will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state—

(*i*) the dates on which they died;

(*ii*) the diseases of which they died;

(*iii*) when they were attacked with the diseases they died of;

(*iv*) when they were admitted into the jail hospital for treatment;

(*v*) whether the relatives of the deceased prisoners were intimated of their illness when it took serious turn; if so, when;

(*vi*) the last dates up till which they were engaged in jail task before admission into the hospital;

(*vii*) what were their tasks in the jail;

(*viii*) what were their respective weights when they were first admitted into the jail;

(*ix*) when their weights were taken last before their death;

(*x*) the dates on which they were admitted in the jail; and

(*xi*) the dates on which they were convicted?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: (*a*) No one named Rupeswar Barman was admitted into the Dinajpur Jail. Moniram Barman died there and the subsequent answers refer to him.

(*b*) (*i*) 25th January, 1941

(*ii*) Pneumonia.

(*iii*) and (*iv*) 17th January, 1941.

(*v*) Yes: on 23rd January, 1941.

(*vi*) and (*vii*) In the outside-garden up to 17th January, 1941.

(*viii*) 105 lbs.

(*ix*) On 12th January, 1941.

(*x*) 13th November, 1940.

(*xi*) 19th December, 1940.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: With reference to a previous answer to the same question, the Hon'ble Minister was pleased to admit that two persons died, although the names were not correct according to him?

Mr. SPEAKER: All that he said was that some people died.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Very well, Sir. Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether a second death took place? The name Rupeswar Barman may be mistaken. But has he got information that a second prisoner also died? On the previous occasion the Honb'le Minister admitted that there were two deaths.

Mr. SPEAKER: So far as the name is concerned, Barman is correct.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: We want to know whether he has got information on that point; otherwise we are helpless.

Mr. SPEAKER: You may ask whether any other Barman besides Maniram Barman died.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: On the last occasion I said that the names were mistaken and that they were not also security prisoners under the Defence of India Rules. They were ordinary prisoners. Here also the name is not correct.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I perfectly appreciate that. My question is general and very clear. I want to know whether besides Maniram Barman any other Barman died in the Dinajpur Jail and, if so, when and of what disease?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The name is Maheswar Barman and not Rupeswar Barman.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Am I to understand that the second prisoner is Maheswar Barman?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes, Sir.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: If so, will the Hon'ble Minister kindly answer the questions which have been asked in connection with Maniram Barman?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry, that is not fair. You can ask of what disease he died, and so on.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when Maheswar Barman died and of what disease?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The honourable member should give me fresh notice; otherwise I cannot answer this question offhand.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I seek your intervention, Sir, in this matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: I also seek your intervention.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: With reference to his reply (*b*) (*iii*) and (*iv*) and (*b*)(*vi*) and (*vii*) where it is said that he was attacked with pneumonia on the 17th January, 1941, that he was engaged in the outside garden up to 17th January, 1941, and that he was admitted into the hospital on the 17th, does the Hon'ble Minister think it desirable to enquire as to whether the convict who was suffering from pneumonia on the 17th could have been engaged in garden work on that day?

Mr. SPEAKER: How does that follow? A man may be working in the morning, but he may fall ill in the evening.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, may I submit that it takes some time to develop pneumonia, it cannot come all of a sudden. In reply to question (*b*) (*iii*) and (*iv*), viz., when they were attacked with the diseases they died of, etc., the Hon'ble Minister says, 17th January, 1941. That means clearly that the prisoner was attacked with pneumonia on the 17th January and admitted into the jail hospital on that very day, but it seems from the reply (*b*) (*vi*) and (*vii*) that he was engaged in the outside garden up to the 17th January. There are certainly medical officers and compounders in the jail. But how is that he was still engaged in the outside garden though he was attacked with pneumonia?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not follow, as I have said before, because he might be engaged in the morning and might fall ill in the evening. Please try to make it as clear as possible.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if by his reply (*b*) (*iii*) he means that the prisoner was attacked with pneumonia on the 17th January?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes, Sir.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: When was he attacked—in the morning or in the evening?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I have no information, but I can understand what the honourable member wants to suggest. Is it very difficult to conceive of a case in which when the case is first diagnosed the patient had already developed pneumonia?

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Sir, the Hon'ble Minister said in reply to a supplementary question that the convict was attacked with pneumonia on the 17th January; so the continuance of fever——

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Why should the honourable member presume that the prisoner must have fever first and he must have been indisposed for two or three days? It is a case which from the first diagnosis was found to be a case of pneumonia.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Even if that is the reply, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he thinks it desirable to enquire as to how and why the man who was attacked with pneumonia on the 17th was engaged in the jail garden on the same day?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: That is a mere coincidence.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state what was the report of the doctor on the very first day of the admission of the patient into the hospital?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I ask for notice.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Is it a fact that the doctor found out that both the lungs were affected on the 17th?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I ask for notice.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to make an enquiry whether the patient was suffering from long before the 17th and then he was admitted?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Evidently, Sir, he was not suffering before the 17th, for in that case he would not have been allowed to work.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state if he has got definite information that the convicted prisoner was not suffering from before the 17th?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I am almost definite on that point. The man was actually working on the 17th and from that I infer that he was not ill before.

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to let the House know about the report of the first day of the admission of the patient?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I ask for notice.

Mr. NISHITHA NATH KUNDU: Shall we take it then that the Hon'ble Minister has no definite information as to whether the convicted prisoner was suffering from long before the 17th and depends on inference only from the fact that he was engaged in work till the 17th?

Mr. SPEAKER: That question does not arise.

Middle English and high English schools for Scheduled Castes in the Province.

***188. Mr. MONOMOHAN DAS:** Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Education Department be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the total number of (1) middle English and (2) high English schools at present existing in Bengal mainly managed by the Scheduled Caste people or largely attended by the Scheduled Caste students, district by district?

MINISTER in charge of the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq): A statement furnishing the information is laid on the table.

A statement with reference to the reply to starred question No. 188, showing the number of Scheduled Caste high English and middle English schools district by district.

	Name of district.	No. of high English schools.	No. of middle English schools.
1.	Chittagong	..	1
2.	Noakhali	..	3
3.	Tippera	..	3
4.	Dacca	1	4
5.	Mymensingh	..	5
6.	Bakarganj	5	9
7.	Faridpur	6	17*
8.	Darjeeling	..	1
9.	Jalpaiguri	..	7
10.	Rajshahi	..	4
11.	Rangpur	1	11
12.	Dinajpur	..	4
13.	Pabna	..	4
14.	Bogra	..	..
15.	Malda	..	..
16.	Burdwan	..	..
17.	Hooghly	..	..
18.	Howrah	..	2
19.	Midnapore	..	1
20.	Birbhum	..	..
21.	Bankura	..	2
22.	24-Parganas	3	14
23.	Khulna	2	30
24.	Nadia	..	1
25.	Jessore	1	10*
26.	Murshidabad	..	1
	Total	19	134

*Includes one girls' middle English school.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

(to which answers were laid on the table)

Headquarters of Noakhali district.

67. Mr. PRATUL CHANDRA GANGULI: (*a*) Will the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Begumganj has been selected by the Government as the new headquarters of the Noakhali district?

(*b*) If the answer to (*a*) is in the affirmative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state whether the construction of the Government buildings has been started?

(*c*) If the answer to (*b*) is in the negative, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state when the construction is likely to be started?

(*d*) When do the Government expect to shift the headquarters to Begumganj?

MINISTER in charge of the REVENUE DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy: (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) The construction of buildings will start after the required land has been acquired and raised.

(*d*) The headquarters will be shifted to Begumganj as soon as the buildings are ready.

Discontinuance of grant of daily allowance to lower subordinates.

68. Maulvi AZHAR ALI: (*a*) Is the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Communications and Works Department aware that daily allowance to sub-overseer of Subordinate Engineering Service to the Government of Bengal has been discontinued after 1931?

(*b*) If so, will the Hon'ble Minister be pleased to state the reason thereof?

(*c*) Is the Hon'ble Minister considering the desirability of granting daily allowance to these officers?

MINISTER in charge of the COMMUNICATIONS and WORKS DEPARTMENT (the Hon'ble Maharaja Srischandra Nandy, of Cossimbazar): (*a*) Lower subordinates of this department were never given any daily allowance. The question of discontinuing the allowance does not, therefore, arise.

(*b*) and (*c*) Do not arise.

Maulvi AZHAR ALI: Sir, my question was about the subordinate engineering staff. But I see printed here "lower subordinates." I did not mean sub-overseers in my question.

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall see to that.

Left-over Questions.

(At this stage Mr. Speaker announced that the held-over questions may be taken up, when Mr. Atul Krishna Ghose made the following statement.)

Mr. ATUL KRISHNA GHOSE: Sir, the held-over questions are not with us now and without them it would be impossible to ask supplementary questions. May I therefore ask you to postpone the matter till Thursday next?

Mr. SPEAKER: All right, if the House agrees we will take up the held-over questions the next day.

Pending Questions.

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: May I enquire, Sir, as to the fate of the questions which as usual have been unanswered during this session? I want to know whether Government is going to give replies to all the pending questions.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will take up the matter the next day.

Mr. Azhar Ali, as regards your unstarred question No. 68, I see that the word "sub-overseer" was written in your question with as black an ink as possible.

DEMAND FOR GRANT.

7—Land Revenue.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, on the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor, I beg to move that a sum of Rs. 31,58,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue."

As on previous occasions, I shall refrain from making a detailed reference to the different heads of the budget, but shall confine myself to some of the most important features of the "Revenue" budget for the

next year. The most important subject that has been engaging the department's attention is the Land Revenue Commission's Report. It has been already suggested that this important subject should be discussed in this House at an early date, and I believe it may be possible to fix a date in early April——

Mr. SYED JALALUDDIN HASHEMY: This April?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes. Government will anxiously await the opinion of the honourable members on this matter. The report contains far-reaching and momentous recommendations and naturally they require very careful and detailed consideration by Government, and I am sure it will be the desire of the honourable members of this House that Government should analyse every recommendation in all its aspects and in all its implications before coming to a decision one way or the other, because some of the recommendations really will touch the very life of the people, and it will be rather unfortunate and very undesirable for this province to take any decision on a question like this without proper and careful consideration.

Sir, another question which has been engaging the attention of the Revenue Department is cess revaluation. Honourable members are aware that in several districts Government have already undertaken revaluation of cesses. Cesses were last revalued at a time when the price of agricultural produce was rather high and the total cess receipts of the districts naturally went up. There was another factor which directly contributed to the increase in cesses, and that is the classification known as the "cess tenure-holder" which was introduced during the last cess revaluation. An occupancy *raiyat*, say, with 10 *bighas* of land, if he had let out a small portion of his holding in *barga*, he was placed in the category of cess tenure-holder and cess was assessed on his net profit from those 10 *bighas*. That was one of the reasons why the cess increased very much, and now that the prices of agricultural produce have come down these poor agriculturists do feel it greatly. That was one of the reasons why Government thought that revaluation of cesses should be taken up.

Now, in this connection, Sir. I would refer to the principle of Chapter 7A of the amended Bengal Cess Act. In the old Act the principle of assessment of cess is that the higher the rent the higher the cess. But according to Chapter 7A the underlying principle is that the whole area should be divided into different units and the acreage rate should be fixed on produce basis, and then the rent of the holding should be deducted from the total value of the holding and the cess should be assessed, so that if the rent is higher than the acreage rate,

no cess is payable. The higher the rent the lower the cess according to the principle of Chapter 7A of the amended Cess Act. Now this will give relief to those classes of people, namely, who were placed in the category of cess tenure-holders during the last cess revaluation.

Then, Sir, another direct effect of revaluation of cess under Chapter 7A would be to bring down the total cess receipts of the districts. In fact, we have already completed revaluation under the new Act in two districts, namely, Jessore and Bogra. There the cess receipts have come down very much and just for the information of the House I shall quote the figures. In Jessore the cess demand according to the previous cess valuation used to be Rs. 4,93,610 and the total cess receipts according to the revaluation under Chapter 7A have come down to Rs. 3,31,063. In Bogra the cess receipts under the previous Act used to be Rs. 3,02,064. It will come down to Rs. 2,18,567. Thus there will be a heavy fall in the cess receipts of the districts. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: In Khulna?) In Khulna it has not yet been completed. But in case of individual cess-payers the incidence of cess might go up very much. For instance, Bogra has been divided into three units. According to the last revaluation, in unit No. 1, the incidence of cess was 5 pice; in unit No. 2 it was also 5 pice; in unit No. 3 it was 3 pice; whereas according to the new revaluation in unit No. 1 it will be 13 pice; in unit No. 2 it will be 13 pice; in unit No. 3 it will be 10 pice. (RAI HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: How could that be?) Yes, Sir, it would be on the acreage rate basis, because formerly it was only on the rent basis. Similarly in Pabna in unit No. 1 it used to be 5 pice; in unit No. 2, 5 pice; in unit No. 3, 6¾ pice. It is going to be 12½ pice in unit No. 1, 14½ pice in unit No. 2 and 15 pice in unit No. 3. Thus the House will realise that individual cess-payers may have to pay a much higher figure than they used to pay under the old Act. (Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: But their number is three times.) Sir, the tenants will suffer in either case, because in the district of Pabna the number of cess tenure-holders whose case I described just now form about 50 per cent. of the tenants. In any case, Government do realise the difficulty that it will increase the incidence of cess in individual cases very much, and it may cause very serious hardship. We are proceeding with cess revaluation operations in certain districts. I think Government must take stock from the reports that they receive from various districts and decide whether they shall actually enforce the revalued cess under the new Act or not. That is a point which requires very serious consideration. Personally, I am inclined to think that this Act will not prove a success, and it will require a thorough overhauling. Chapter 7A will prove a failure. That is my view. But we propose to collect data only in those districts where the cess revaluation operations have already proceeded far, but by that we do not mean that we shall enforce the increased cess. We shall only collect data for

the purpose of consideration as to whether Government should proceed with revaluation under the new Cess Act or should amend the Cess Act or stick to the old Act.

Another important question which is engaging the attention of the Revenue Department is the revisional survey and settlement operations. We have already taken up revisional survey and settlement operations in two districts, namely, in Faridpur and Bakarganj. Sir, the total cost is going to be much less and it will not be more than Rs. 730 per square mile or Re. 1-2-3 per acre of which the tenants and landlords will have to pay annas 13-6, the balance being paid by Government. (RAI HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: What was the original rate?) It was much higher; it was over Rs. 2 in certain districts. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: In these two districts?) I do not exactly remember what was the rate in those districts but in some districts, say, in Howrah the rate was very high. We are trying to minimise the rate by simplification of the procedure and we hope that this will prove a success.

Of course, the main object of revisional survey and settlement operations is to bring the records up to date and records in some of the districts have become absolutely out of date especially in those districts where there are alluvion and diluvion.

Another important question in which I am sure the House feels interested is that of granting certain status and rights to fishermen in fisheries. Government appointed a Special Officer to go into the whole matter with a view to find out whether the fishermen could not be granted certain status on the lines of occupancy rights. Now, Sir, the terms of reference were: "whether the State control of fisheries is possible and desirable, whether better management of all private and Government fisheries is possible by the formation of co-operative societies of fishermen, whether legislation should be undertaken on the lines of the Indian Forest Act by which private forests are managed by Government, whether legislation should be undertaken to regulate the existing rights of fishermen and to settle fair rents for fisheries, whether it will serve the best interests of fishermen if occupancy right is conferred on them in respect of fisheries on the analogy of the same right conferred by the Bengal Tenancy Act on individual agriculturists, whether close seasons for certain fish should be observed, etc."

Now, we have received the report from the Special Officer, a very elaborate and very valuable report, and the examination of that report is nearing completion. I hope to place the report before the Legislature in its next session.

I will now draw your attention to the question of land alienation. Many questions were put in this House by some honourable members drawing Government's attention to the fact that land was passing out

of the hands of agriculturists to non-agriculturists and they suggested that Government should legislate at once to put a stop to the process. This question was carefully considered and we appointed special staff to investigate into the problem. In fact, as many as 1,827,000 acres of land were investigated in Rangpur in 26 police-stations, and it was found on enquiry during the settlement operation in that district that only 13,943 acres or ·7 per cent. of the total area was transferred from agriculturists to non-agriculturists.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: Which district?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I am talking of Rangpur. In seven other police-stations of the same district with a total area of 486,024 acres only 1,500 acres or ·3 per cent. passed into the hands of non-agriculturists in 12 years. In the colonisation area of the 24-Parganas the total number of transfers of *raiyati* lands from 1926 was only 1,432, of which only 434 or 30 per cent. was transferred to non-agriculturists. (Rai HARENDRA NATH CHAUDHURI: 30 per cent.?) Yes, in so many years. The natural conclusion is that the problem is not so serious as it is supposed to be.

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: The Floud Commission recommended that there should be legislation.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes, the Floud Commission recommended that there should be legislation. We shall place all the facts before the House and if the House still considers that legislation is necessary and desirable, of course, Government will be only too glad to undertake such legislation. But before doing so I shall certainly ask the House to pay special attention to the question of rural credit, whether it is going to affect the rural credit further or not. That point should be carefully borne in mind.

The House may remember that we appointed the Rent Enquiry Committee about a couple of years ago. The committee had several sittings and the members of the committee made extensive tours in different districts to study the problems themselves. The committee had a sitting only last week and it came to certain provisional conclusions, but the members propose to submit their final decisions on some of the important questions within a couple of months, and Government must await their recommendations.

Sir, there was another committee appointed by Government, namely, the Non-Agricultural Tenancy Committee. This committee has completed its work. The report is now being prepared. I was hoping that the report would be in the hands of the Revenue Department by the end of February, but I regret to say that it was not possible to complete

it and probably a month or 5 weeks more would be necessary to complete the report. Mr. Blandy who is carrying on the onerous duties of the Chief Secretary is also the President of this committee. So, naturally we have got to pay every consideration to his convenience. In any case, I hope that by the monsoon session Government should be able to come forward with their comprehensive legislation on this non-agricultural tenancy question.

The status of the *dhankarari* or *tankha* tenants in the partially excluded area in Mymensingh was another problem which the Revenue Department had to deal with last year. The *chukti* or *dhankarari* tenants were not given any status under the Bengal Tenancy Act. So many of them were treated by the landlords as tenants-at-will. Government have now decided to give them the status of a tenant with retrospective effect and His Excellency has promulgated a Regulation for the purpose.

Special steps have also been taken to give protection to the aboriginal tenants, to look into their social welfare and to tackle the problems of their education. In those districts where the number of aboriginal tenants are large, namely, in Bankura, Birbhum and Malda, Government have appointed Special Officers to take care of the aboriginal agriculturists.

Sir, the next question is the improvement of Government *khas mahal* estates. We appointed a Special Officer to make a survey and to prepare a comprehensive scheme to be carried out in five years' time for the improvement of some of the important *khas mahal* estates in different districts such as Bakarganj, Noakhali and Chittagong. The Special Officer has submitted his report and Government propose to spend over Rs. 3 lakhs in five years' time for the improvement of these estates. They will improve the drainage, embankments and agricultural conditions of those areas whereby they will contribute to the economic improvement of the tenantry in those estates. Sir, I will now turn to the development of Kalimpong. The development of this hill station was taken up, I think, about 25 years ago by the previous Government, and Government spent altogether something like Rs. 18 lakhs, but up till now the return is by no means very encouraging. But recently there has been a very great improvement in the situation, and Government have been receiving larger number of applications for lands in Kalimpong. So we have decided to spend Rs. 50,000 in the next five years in improving the roads and providing building sites to the lessees.

Last of all, I will turn to the serious agrarian situation in some of the districts, because of drought, namely, the district of Birbhum, part of the district of Murshidabad, part of the district of Burdwan and part of the district of Bankura. These districts have suffered

seriously because of drought and especially the district of Birbhum where the crop failed completely. We have started comprehensive relief works and have decided to take up tank improvement schemes so as to provide means for irrigation as an insurance against failure of crops in years of drought in future. We have also provided Rs. 50,000 for Birbhum in addition to the usual water-supply grants for sinking tube-wells because great scarcity of drinking water is apprehended in this district. A sum of Rs. 1,00,000 has been sanctioned as gratuitous relief, and a further sum of Rs. 2,000 as gratuitous relief from trust funds at the disposal of Government for distribution amongst the middle class people who are not entitled to gratuitous relief from the general revenues of Government.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Only Rs. 2,000?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Yes, Rs. 2,000; my friend only takes note when the figure is only Rs. 2,000, but he conveniently forgets to take note of figures when these are sufficiently high. That is the tragedy of it.

Now, Sir, I will refer to the amounts sanctioned for the purpose which are as follows:—

		Rs.
Ordinary agricultural loans	...	8,29,000
Short-term loans	...	1,90,000
Test relief work	...	99,700
Roads and other works	...	66,000
Gratuitous relief	...	1,51,000
Gratuitous relief from trust funds	...	2,000

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion to the acceptance of the House.

Mr. ABDULLAH-AL MAHMOOD: What about the reduction of rents? That is a very important question on which we want to know what is going to be the attitude of Government.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I am sorry my friend did not pay sufficient attention to what I had said. I have said that we are awaiting the Rent Enquiry Committee's Report. The committee has not yet completed its work, but we expect that the committee will make its final recommendations very shortly.

(At this stage Mr. Ramizuddin Ahmed rose to speak.)

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: May I have your kind permission to make a statement?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: The Government of India sanctioned Rs. 20,000 from the Indian People's Relief Trust Fund for distribution of gratuitous relief in this province. We received this information from the Revenue Secretary who had been to Delhi and returned only this morning.

Mr. RAMIZUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100, and in this connection I want to raise a discussion about the Rent Enquiry Committee's failure and the failure of the Government to make a general reduction of the rent of the *raiyats*.

Sir, the rent question is the life and death question of 90 per cent. of the people of Bengal. If we trace the origin of the rent system in India, we find that both during the Hindu and Muhammadan rule in India a portion of the produce of the soil was retained by the ruling authority in lieu of the protection that he gave to the tenants from the wicked people or the facilities that he offered to the tenants for drainage, irrigation works, roads, medical relief, education, etc. These Hindu and Muhammadan rulers never asserted any right or interest in land. The tillers of the soil were the real proprietors of the land.

Previous to the British rule, foreign invaders, both Hindu and Muhammadan, after conquering the country, settled here and made it their hearth and home. They therefore always tried to improve this country and the condition of the people in culture, in economic betterment, in industry and in agriculture. But with the advent of the British rule in India, we find quite the reverse of the previous order of things. The English people came here to gather wealth and they conquered the country with that end in view, and therefore their only objective was the creation of a field here for the open exploitation of the masses in the interest of enriching their mother country—I mean England.

To make their rule and exploitation easy and permanent they thought of creating a set of persons in this country who would sail in the same boat of exploiting the masses of this country. Thus, the British rulers created some vested interests in this country and the zemindari system is one of them.

In 1793, Lord Cornwallis made the zemindars of Bengal the absolute proprietors of the soil with a fixed revenue in perpetuity. By this the *raiyats* who were previously the real proprietors of the soil were gradually relegated to the position of serfs or slaves. Everywhere in social and political life we find that there are reciprocal duties and obligations. It is wonderful that here the zemindars were made the absolute proprietors of the soil having the power to increase the rent to any amount and realise it in any manner and evict at will the *raiyats* who cultivated the waste lands and made it fertile with the sweat of their brow. The zemindars will enjoy the fruits of the hard labour of the tiller of the soil, and they have no duties or obligations to discharge towards the *raiyats*. Is there any sense of justice or equity in this? Of course when the Permanent Settlement was made, a pious hope was expressed that the zemindars would improve the condition of the soil which never materialised. The landlords are paying to the Government about 3 crores, and they are now exacting from the tenants about 20 crores without any duties or obligations to the tenants to be discharged. Can there be any worse type of exploitation than this?

Now coming to the rate of rent, we find on the authority of Colebrooke's "Husbandry and Internal Trade of Bengal" that the average rental in Bengal at the time of the Permanent Settlement comprised one-eighth of the value of the gross produce and according to him the average of rent was Re. 1-5 per acre of cultivated land. As to the fixity of rate of rent we find from the Dispatch of the Court of Directors of September, 1793, sanctioning Permanent Settlement, in which they definitely expressed that, "It is an object of perpetual settlement that it should secure to the great body of *raiyats* the same equity and certainly as to the amount of rent and the same undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of industry which they mean to the zemindars themselves." From this we find that the zemindars had no right and authority to increase the rate of rent of the *raiyats* as it existed at the time of the Permanent Settlement.

Afterwards in Regulation IV of 1794 it was provided for removing all doubts that the rate of rent whose lease has been cancelled owing to the sale of estate for arrears of revenue, should not pay rent at more than the *pargana* rate if they are allowed to hold on and the rent of the raiyats who took new lease should not also be fixed at more than the *pargana* rates.

It was thus made clear that as revenue would remain unaltered though estates may change hands, the rate of rent of the *raiyats* should also remain unaltered though the lands may change hands.

The real cause of failure of protection from enhancement was Government's nervousness for the safety of the revenue permanently fixed and a strong desire for the prosperity of the zemindars and this

made Government subsequently to enact some anti-tenant legislations with the help of legislatures which were then landlord-ridden which entitled them to increase the rent to any extent. The 1885 enactment authorised the landlords legally to enhance the rent of the *raiyats* on the ground of price of crops and other grounds.

From the most reliable record of the Permanent Settlement period, we find that the rate of rent of the *raiyats* of Bengal has increased by more than three times of the original rent. By the help of the repressive laws, the life-blood of the tenants was simply allowed to be sucked by these exploiters. The landlords have increased the rate of rent to such an abnormal extent that justice and equity demand that it should be lowered. It has become now impossible for the tenants to pay and hence they are compelled to default. For inability to pay this high rate of rent lakhs of people of Bengal have been compelled to leave their home and hearth and take shelter in the forest of Assam!

A reaction has set in and due to the pressure of the national movement, the British Government was compelled to grant a limited provincial autonomy in 1935 on the basis of extended franchise. By this the poorer section of the people were given a greater number of seats in the Legislature. But the British Government true to their tradition of exploitation divided the seats of the Legislature on the basis of vested interests, communal and sub-communal lines, and they managed in such a way that the real representatives of the poor people of the country irrespective of caste and creed may not unite together and the representatives of the vested interests were made the real or balance of power in the Legislature of this province.

However, before the last election an attempt was made by launching upon the Krishak Proja movement headed by the present Premier Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq to frustrate the evil intention of the framers of the Indian Constitution of 1935 and to unite the poor voters of Bengal as against the capitalists. On the other hand, the capitalists, both Hindus and Muhammadans, raised the religious cries to deceive the poor religious-minded illiterate voters.

Thus most of the zemindars and capitalists who are the real enemies of the poor people of the country and having no faith in religion or religious activities managed to be elected by the votes of the poor *raiyats* by the help of the false religious cries and thus frustrated to a great extent the object of the Krishak Proja movement.

However, due to the pressure of the Krishak Proja movement most of the members of this House, both Hindus and Muhammadans by whatever cries they might have been elected, were compelled to give their solemn promise to the voters of Bengal that they will reduce the rate of rent of the *raiyats* and abolish the zemindari system. If promise

has got any moral or religious sanctity and if we are accountable to God for all these promises, most of the members of this House including the great Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq are bound to support the reduction of rent.

The Hon'ble Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the Chief Minister of Bengal, when he formed the Ministry in 1937 consisting of five Hindus and five Muhammadan zemindars and capitalists, it was clear as broad daylight to any thoughtful person who looked to the welfare of the *krishaks* that the hope of reduction of rent or abolition of the zemindari system in Bengal by the present Cabinet was a dream of the past. Even in 1937 the Krishak Proja Assembly members predicted that the present Ministry shall not reduce the rate of rent in Bengal. It is simply madness to expect the reduction of rent and abolition of the zemindari system with the help of the zemindar Cabinet. Whenever there is any awakening of the people and they make any demand, commissions and committees are generally appointed to deceive the people into silence. Even in 1937 the Krishak Proja members of the Assembly predicted by their speeches in the Assembly that the formation of the Floud Commission and the Rent Enquiry Committee were simply meant for a device to hoodwink the people of Bengal, and it was further meant to create a document against the *raiyats* so that in future they may not raise any cry for reduction of rent or abolition of the zemindari system.

But in spite of our protests, the present Government formed the Floud Commission and Rent Enquiry Committee to enquire into the land system and that of rent in Bengal without deciding these matters in the Assembly Chamber by the votes of the representatives of the people of Bengal.

After the lapse of four long years and the expenditure of lakhs and lakhs of rupees for these commissions and committees, the report of the Floud Commission is now before us, and we find that all the predictions and forecasts of the Krishak Proja Assembly members have come to be too true.

So far as the rent is concerned, the Floud Commission by a majority says in conclusion (in Vol. I, page 100 of that report) that there would be justification for enhancement rather than reduction of rent in Bengal. So far as the zemindari system is concerned, the Commission recommends for compensation to be given to the zemindars by 10 to 15 per cent. of the net profits of the property. Why this compensation? Did the zemindars pay anything to the *raiyats* at the time of the Permanent Settlement when the proprietary rights of the *raiyats* were taken away from them, or did the zemindars pay any such amount to the British rulers when they secured this Permanent Settlement enactment? I do not wonder at the decision of the Commission because it is what we predicted long ago.

The decisions of this committee should be an eye-opener to the people of Bengal. So long as British Imperialism will rule in India, they will protect these zemindars and capitalists who are their agency here. The present Cabinet of Bengal is a true agent of the exploiters. It is simply madness to expect reduction of rent through their hands.

In conclusion, I must appeal through the Speaker to the poor *krishaks* of Bengal and particularly to those members of the Assembly who entertain any idea to do any good to the people by reducing the rent and abolishing the zemindari system to give up all the present bogus religious false cries of the capitalists to deceive and exploit the poor illiterate masses and to rally round the banner of the Krishak Proja movement to drive away the foreign exploiters and capture the real power, and we shall find that all these zemindari and other vested interests which the Muslim Leaguers call it statutory and mandatory rights and for which the Muslim Leaguers are out for their upkeep, will vanish in no time.

With these words, Sir, I commend my motion for the acceptance of the House.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as it would be more relevant for me to move my motion in this connection, I crave your indulgence in that matter. Before I proceed may I have your permission to make just a little verbal alteration, that is, instead of 20 years I want to make it 30 years?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

The purpose of my motion is to raise a discussion about the reduction of rent at least to the extent of enhancements that have taken place in course of the last 30 years.

Sir, in tabling this motion of mine I have tried to keep myself out of the controversial questions which have been discussed amply on the floor of this House as well as outside. So far as the report of the Floud Commission is concerned, to which my friend the Hon'ble Revenue Minister referred this evening, well, we have made our position amply clear that we have no delusion about it. Sir, in the name of an examination of the complicated questions of land revenue, the committee was appointed not at all to settle the questions and our suspicions which at a previous stage were vague have now deepened that this committee was constituted only to shelve the question which has been agitating the public mind for a long time. But I will not go

into that this evening. Sir, the object of my cut motion is to impress upon the Government and also incidentally upon my friends of the Coalition Party the fact that during the last four years not only are Government neglecting the legitimate demands of the people, but what is worse and more pathetic is that our friends of the Coalition Party who came here on definite election pledges are making themselves a party to these side-tracking activities on the part of the Government. Sir, the substance behind my motion will be clear from the admission of the Hon'ble Minister himself. On the 24th February, 1938, in answer to a specific question of mine, the Hon'ble Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy admitted that the enhancement of the average price of staple food-crop had gone down everywhere. Sir, this was the question answered categorically in the affirmative by the Hon'ble Minister and you know that all over Bengal rents were enhanced after the war period by virtue of the provisions of section 30 on the ground of rise in prices of staple food-crops, and it is now Government's admission that after the said enhancement prices have gone down very much, and this admission by the Revenue Minister is borne out by statistics and figures furnished by Government themselves. Sir, in that connection I put a question as to whether it is known to Government that in no single instance rents have been reduced amicably or by suit as between the tenants and the landlords. The Revenue Minister was not good enough to give a frank answer to that question, but he tried to wriggle out of the whole question by saying that in Chittagong *khas mahal* estates certain reductions were given by Government. But the hollowness of that answer was exposed forthwith by another supplementary question put by my good friend Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmad and in the course of that interpellation it was made clear that it was not a reduction that the Government effected, but a new settlement on the basis of revisional operations. Anyway, Sir, my question was purely aimed at getting facts as to whether all over Bengal there was a single case of landlord agreeing to a reduction of rent although admittedly the price of staple food-crops had gone down by leaps and bounds. By implication the answer of the Hon'ble Minister was in the negative. Sir, you are aware of the provisions of section 38 of the Bengal Tenancy Act. The occupancy *raiyat* may institute a suit for the reduction of his rent on one or more of the following grounds, namely, on the ground that there has been a fall in the price of staple food-crops. Sir, although there is this specific provision in the Bengal Tenancy Act, it is known that our tenantry are so helpless, that the conventions of defeatism are so rampant in our country that in spite of the specific provisions for getting reduction of rent through court, you will not find a single instance all over Bengal that a reduction has been effected either by suit or amicably. It is very serious when there is a provision in the law to guide the tenantry to some sort of relief and when the tenantry

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Government to relegate all burning questions into a confusion of wider cases. It may be to the interests of capitalist-minded sections of the House to thrust all clear issues into the background of more complicated issues, but so far as we are concerned we are definite that this question could have been and should have been settled independently and irrespective of not only the Floud Commission but also of the Rent Enquiry Committee. Sir, much hope was raised by the Rent Enquiry Committee because it was after all a committee of our House. We have been sadly disappointed. We did not entertain any hopes of the Floud Commission, because we knew that it was a costly step to ward off the demands of the people. But then, Sir, to-day let us sit down and let us give a clear mandate on this issue to the Ministry that whatever you may do with the Floud Commission's report, whatever you may do with the larger question of revenue administration, whatever you may do in connection with the general incidence of rent, the issue is clear. It may be that Bengal's land is not over-rented. It may be that it is over-rented. These are questions which need not confuse the issue which I have sought to raise. Here the issue is clear, that the rent was enhanced on the basis of extra price of staple food-crops. It has been admitted by the Government, and it is known to the people at large that the prices have come down. The law provides for a reduction of the rent. But the people have been unable to take recourse to law. When helpless people cannot themselves utilise the provisions of law, Government by all means ought to come forward to rescue them and if the Government fail, let us, members of the rank and file irrespective of our party affiliations, drive the Government to the proper course in this matter.

Maharajkumar UDAY CHAND MAHTAB: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the proposal for a general reduction in the rates of rent in this province, and to draw the attention of Government and of the House to the land revenue policy of the present Government.

Sir, it is very easy to make a sweeping suggestion for a general reduction of the rate of rents of the *raiyats*, but I am afraid the mover of the cut motion is not probably aware of the fact that matters like this can only be done after due and prolonged enquiry.

Sir, I would like to point out in this connection that personally I am not against the idea of relief to the tenants where the rate of rent is really high. I personally believe in moderate rents and speedy realisations. But *ad hoc* reduction of rent is a matter which is neither desirable nor possible. The rate has to be settled on various considerations such as productivity, price of produce, etc. What may be considered a high rent for a particular plot of land may be quite a moderate rent for other lands.

Sir, most probably the demand for a general reduction of rent is made on the presumption that the existing rate of rent prevailing in the province is excessive, but this presumption is not supported by facts. If we look at the Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Vol. II, Table (vi) (a), it gives us the following average rate of cash rent per acre for *raiyats* in different districts:—

		Rs.	as.
Bakarganj	...	4	8
Bankura	...	2	1
Birbhum	...	3	14
Bogra	...	2	14
Burdwan	...	3	15
Chittagong	...	4	11
Dacca	...	2	13
Dinajpur	...	2	7
Faridpur	...	2	9
Hooghly	...	7	7
Howrah	...	8	3
Jalpaiguri	...	2	5
Jessore	...	2	8
Khulna	...	3	6
Malda	...	2	6
Midnapore	...	3	15
Murshidabad	...	3	7
Mymensingh	...	2	14
Nadia	...	2	7
Noakhali	...	4	4
Pabna	...	3	1
Rajshahi	...	3	3
Rangpur	...	3	0
Tippera	...	3	2
24-Parganas	...	5	13
Darjeeling	...	2	5

From this it appears that the high rates are prevalent in Hooghly and Howrah which are Rs. 7-7 and Rs. 8-3 per acre respectively——

Mr. ATUL CHANDRA KUMAR: What about the under-*raiyat*?

Maharajkumar UDAY CHAND MAHTAB: Please be patient and hear me. The Commission compared the rates of rent in Bengal with those in other provinces with reference to the produce of the lands.

The finding of the Commission is that considering the level of rents in other provinces the value of the produce and prevailing economic conditions there would be justification for enhancement rather than reduction of rent in Bengal.

Sir, the question of reduction of rent is an intricate problem, and I am sure the Government is already considering the matter. The question was and is still being considered in a committee which was appointed by Government in August, 1938. The Hon'ble Minister has just spoken about this committee.

The question of reduction of rent is very intricate and requires a thorough and comprehensive examination, and any hasty decision is fraught with danger of jeopardising the land tenure system of the province as a whole. In this connection it would not be out of place if I were to mention the experience of the sister province of Orissa where the Rent Reduction Bill which was hastily rushed through the Legislature did not receive the assent of the Governor-General. I would therefore request the Government to consider all these matters and not to introduce any further hasty legislation without considering the full effect of what a general reduction of the rate of rent may mean.

Sir, landlords have already been deprived of the right of enhancing rent under the amended section 75A of the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1928. But the last decennial figures of the price of staple food-crops have definitely shown an upward tendency which if it remains steady would not justify the amended section 75A of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1938. The following are the prices of staple food-crops of Bengal for the last decennial period. The figures from 1931 to 1939 are taken from Table V of the Index Number of Prices, published by the Government of India, and the figure for 1940 is compiled from the figures published by the Government of Bengal in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

Year.		Average price of rice.		
		Rs.	as.	p.
1931	...	4	1	9
1932	...	3	1	9
1933	...	2	14	6
1934	...	3	6	9
1935	...	3	7	6
1936	...	4	1	0
1937	...	3	8	9
1938	...	3	9	9
1939	...	3	13	6
1940 about	...	5	0	0

And the average price in the current year is Rs. 6.

Sir, I would like an assurance from the Minister in charge of Land Revenue that the Government will consider some speedy method for realisation of rents.

Speedy realisation is as much necessary to the tenants as to the landlords, for if the landlords get their rents regularly, they should be satisfied with moderate rent and if the tenants were made to pay the rents regularly, they would not get into the habit of falling into arrears. In most cases one would find that the *jotedar's* rent is higher than the actual zemindar's—the under-*raiyat's* rate is Rs. 6-3 per acre. I am sure Government itself realises the difficulties of collecting rents and in the case of private landlords who now have no means of speedy realisation, it is extremely difficult to collect rents and meet the demands of Government revenue and cesses.

Sir, landlords have been placed in further difficulty by making them responsible for the collection of the Education Cess. Landlords are unable to collect rents and ordinary cesses to the full and all arrears of cesses due are realised from them by certificate and under section 99 of the Cess Act. Landlords now have to pay a large part of the tenants' share of the Education Cess also, a burden which they can hardly bear on account of the narrow margin of profit now left to them.

Before I conclude, Sir, may I request the Government through the Hon'ble Minister in charge of Land Revenue Department to enquire into and place before the House what benefit the actual *raiyats* or the term which is so often used in this House, namely, the "tillers of the soil," has received during these four years, due to the various Tenancy Legislations which have been passed by this House from time to time. This in itself, Sir, will show whether actually any good has been done to the real cultivators and which was no doubt the object of those who introduced and carried through these hasty legislations.

Mr. MADHUSUDAN SARKER: Sir, there is a motion standing in my name about fishery rights of fishermen. I do not like to move it, but I shall make a speech.

Sir, it is a well-known fact that a large section of the people of this province have been living by fishing. There are more than six lakhs of people—fishing is their only profession and fishing is their only source of livelihood.

Sir, these fishermen have been enjoying fisheries from time immemorial; they have been catching fish in those fisheries from generation to generation. But there has been no fixity of rent they pay to the proprietors. They have got no right of permanent character in those fisheries. Their rent has been fluctuating, their rights have been

ever changing. They have been entirely left at the mercy of the greedy proprietors. In this uncertain state of things these poor fishermen have always been subject to oppression, torture and illegal realisation by the zemindars, *talukdars* and their *tahsildars*. In this uncertain state of things they have been harassed more by the *tahsildars* than by the zemindars and *talukdars*—their masters. They are not only troubled by the proprietors but also harassed and disturbed by the individual public in their profession. From the very nature of their profession they are quite unable to protect themselves against the oppression and torture by their enemies at the place of their profession on the surface of water far away from their residence. They have got homes, but seldom they have time to stay there. For their profession they are always on the big rivers and seas far away from home at the risk of their lives. They catch fish under all circumstances in winter and summer, in rains and storms. Sir, such is the nature of their business, such is the mode of their living and such is the method of their earning livelihood.

Sir, as land is important and valuable to the agriculturist, so the water is to these fishermen. Government have the kindness to pass laws after laws regulating the relations of the landlords and tenants, but they seem to be quite indifferent in the matter of giving protection to these poor and helpless sections of people. It is true for the last few years the Fishery Department which was abolished in 1923 has reattracted the notice of the Government. The Government in 1937 appointed a Special Officer to enquire into the fisheries of the province from the point of industry. The Special Officer after an enquiry submitted his report which has been resting with the Government for consideration. We do not know how long they will take to finish the matter so urgent. Sir, there is no diversity of opinion as to importance of fish which is the principal article of diet to the millions of Bengalis. Almost all people of Bengal with a few exceptions take fish. Such fish is gradually decreasing. Unless Government comes forward with a measure for the protection or preservation of fish in the near future, I have reasonable apprehension that the supply of fish will fall short. Again, Sir, in the latter part of 1938, at the instance of the Revenue Department, the Special Officer was appointed to enquire into the fishery rights of the province. He also submitted his report which has been resting with the Government, but I do not understand the reason why the Government remain silent about the matter so important and so urgent.

Sir, some private Fishery Bills were introduced into the Legislature during the time previous to this, but they were not passed into laws. There are still pending some Bills of which we have notice about their placing in the House. But, Sir, I am sure from the mentality of the party politics of Government that those Bills are not to be passed into

laws. It is true that those Bills do not deal with all the necessary points. They are not exhaustive treatments of the subject, but my complaint against the Government is about their negligence and callousness to the protection of this section of people. I do not understand the reason why the Government seem to be so callous to protection of these poor people leading a miserable life in the society.

Sir, I think it will not be out of place to mention to the House an instance of the oppression and torture still going on to these fishermen by the zemindars in the Jalkar Mahmudpur which is down Goalundo just at the junction of the Padma and the Jumna. And the main proprietors of that fishery are the zemindars of Teota. In that fishery the fishermen have been catching fish from time immemorial on payment of annual rent to the proprietors. But the proprietors now with a view to be gainers by unfair means have been demanding share of the catch, on refusal of which with their appointed *lathials* and *goondas* they are obstructing those fishermen in catching fish. There is every likelihood of a breach of the peace and loss of lives. The matter has been brought to the notice of the Government, but I do not know what steps the Government are taking in the matter. Still oppression is being continued. The other day I received a wire from the fishermen there that one Nepan Mandal had snatched away Rs. 300 from one of the Halders there. He lodged an *ejahar* to the Goalundo police-station, but I doubt whether he will get any relief there against such an influential zemindar. Sir, in this state of things I believe all the House feel the necessity of a law for protection and safeguarding the rights and interests of these fishermen against these tyrannical proprietors. In these circumstances I appeal to the Government that they should at once come forward with a comprehensive measure to be placed in the House for the protection of these people. Any further delay means a great loss to this poor section of people and, consequently, a great loss to the society. Sir, such a measure will not only be a great relief to them but also to ensure stable and fixed income to the proprietors. Sir, in this state of things the fishermen are in need of immediate protection.

Sir, in consideration of the urgency of the matter, I further suggest to the Government for an *ad interim* protection to these people to promulgate a Fishery Ordinance on the line that the fishermen shall get a permanent right into their fisheries and they will never be compelled to pay to the zemindars in kind, and the zemindars in case of interference with their rights shall be penalised and a minimum annual rent of one rupee per head shall be fixed for those fishermen.

With these words, I draw the attention of the Government, and the Government will kindly take necessary steps for the protection of these poor people without delay.

Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak a few words on the land revenue policy of the Government. About four years back when we stood for election we gave a solemn pledge to the tenants of Bengal that if elected, we would reduce their rents. Four years have elapsed since then, but to our utter misfortune we have not been able to redeem our pledge yet. A Rent Reduction Committee was set up long, long ago, but no report is forthcoming. And there is no certainty whether it will be coming forth soon. This apathy on the part of the Government clearly shows that they are not willing to do anything to reduce the high rents of the tenantry.

Sir, it was the intention of the authors of the Permanent Settlement that both revenue and rent should remain permanent and unaffected by the rise and fall of prices of commodities. But unfortunately due to the short-sighted policy of the Government the landlords had grown too powerful by 1885, and the Legislature was landlord-ridden and so in spite of opposition from some eminent members of the Rent Law Commission enhancement of *raiyats'* rents by zemindars was made legal——

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: On a point of order, Sir. Can a member of the Coalition Party criticise their own Government? Is it election propaganda?

Mr. ABDULLA-AL MAHMOOD: It is with a view to draw the attention of Government.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: The speech had better been read out at a party meeting.

Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMOOD:——and for the first time after the Permanent Settlement was provided for in the statute book. And since then the zemindars have been merrily going on enhancing the rents of the tenants.

Sir, no attempt has been made to compare the average rate now prevailing, though in my opinion it is necessary for finding out the average rate of enhancements made since the Permanent Settlement. According to the figures given in the Introduction to Colebrooke's Husbandry and Internal Trade of Bengal, it has been seen that taking the whole of Bengal, including Bihar and Orissa, the average rate of rent at the Permanent Settlement period was Re. 1-5 per acre of cultivated land. The average rate of rents of *raiyats* of the permanently settled areas as calculated by the Land Revenue Office is Rs. 3-12 per acre, as against Re. 1-5 per acre of cultivated land at the Permanent Settlement period. The increase works out at 160 per cent. Thus from

the most reliable record of the Permanent Settlement period, we get that the rate of rents of the *raiyats* of Bengal on an average has increased by about 160 per cent. Thus the *raiyats* are now paying about Rs. 812 lakhs in excess annually over what their rents should have been if the Permanent Settlement *pargana* rates had been maintained as was intended by the authors of the Permanent Settlement——

(At this stage the House was adjourned for 15 minutes for prayer.)

(After adjournment.)

Mr. ABDUR RASCHID MAHMOOD: Sir, on the other hand, the revenue of the zemindars has remained what it was at Permanent Settlement and their net income which for Bengal portion was only 20 lakhs (that is one-tenth of the revenue of 2 crores) is now 10 crores and 32 lakhs *minus* 2 crores of revenue which is equivalent to 8 crores and 32 lakhs. Zemindars' income has thus increased from 20 lakhs to 832 lakhs. The increase works out at 4,160 per cent.

I appeal to the Government to take necessary steps to reduce the rents of the tenants by at least 160 per cent. to save them from utter ruin.

Sir, in my own district of Pabna the rate of rent varies from Rs. 3 to Rs. 22-8 per acre. The people are quite unable to pay such high rents. The economic distress due to flood and drought has been the cause of the tenants' inability to clear up their rents annually. The landlords and zemindars have sold many a holding for the realisation of the accumulated arrears of rent. This has evicted thousands of tenants from their homesteads and turned them landless labourers. Some having natural love for their villages and neighbours are working and toiling on the fields of others to earn one meal a day. Others have left their kith and kin and have been settling in the jungles of Assam. The high rate of rent has rent asunder the social fabric of the tenants. This is fortunate for the Government that the tenants are always law-abiding and loyal. But there is a limit to their toleration. If the Government do not come to their rescue to save their hearth and home, to save their life and property, to save their wife and children, the time is not far when it will be an impossible task of Government to put out the conflagration. The social structure which has been built up by the labour of men and nature for centuries will be demolished by their fire and fury.

Therefore, no more time can be wasted on the contemplation of procedure only. Bold and strong steps are immediately necessary. Another thing which I must not forget to mention, and I draw the pointed attention of the Government to this serious question which is at present agitating the minds of the people of the district of Pabna:

The proposal of cess revaluation has created a panic in the minds of the people. By the application of the Cess Revaluation Act, 75 per cent. of the poor tenants will be affected and hard hit by the abnormal increase of the cess, whereas 10 per cent. will have to pay the same amount of cess as they are paying now, and 10 per cent. will have to pay no cess at all, and the remaining 5 per cent. who are the landlords and zemindars and who can afford to pay will be benefited by more than 50 per cent. reduction in their cesses. This is the position in short.

It may not be out of place here to mention that the last revaluation of cess was made in the year 1928-29 and 15 years have not elapsed since then. And the Government have no justification to take up again the work of cess revaluation at the instigation of some interested persons who are sucking the life-blood of the tenants.

Sir, the whole district has been protesting against the cess revaluation measure, and statesmanship demands that Government should respect public opinion. I therefore request the Hon'ble Minister to drop the operation of cess revaluation in Pabna at once.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED : মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আমার বন্ধু রমিজুদ্দিন সাহেব যে খাজনা কমানোর প্রস্তাব উপস্থিত কোরেছেন আমি তা সর্ব্বান্তঃকরণে সমর্থন কোরছি। আমি বোলতে চাই বাংলাদেশের সাড়ে চার কোটী চাষী প্রজারা একটা ভার ও তিনটি ধারের মধ্যে পড়ে তারা হাবুডুবু খাচ্ছে। প্রথমতঃ ভার হোচ্ছে ইংরাজ রাজত্ব এবং ইংরেজরা সৃষ্টি করেছে তাদের রাজত্ব চালানোর সুবিধার জন্য জমিদার। আর জমিদাররা তাদের সুবিধার জন্য তালুকদার ও জোতদার সৃষ্টি করেছেন। এই তিন প্রকার ধারে ও ইংরেজ রাজত্বের ভারের চাপায় পড়ে বাংলার চাষী প্রজারা সর্ব্বস্বান্ত হোয়েছে। তাঁরা চিন্তা কোরে দেখেন না যে এই সব চাষী প্রজারা বেঁচে না থাকলে তাঁদের সুন্দর গৌরবর্ণ দেহ টিকে থাকবে না। চাষীরা যদি লাঙ্গল চালনা না করে তাহলে জমিদার, নবাব, সুবা প্রভৃতি ধনিক বনিক প্রভুদের সরু আতপ চালের ভাত খাওয়া বন্ধ হয়ে যাবে। তাঁরা যদি মনে করেন যে নিজেই লাঙ্গল চালনা করে সরু চালের ভাত খাবেন, তাহলে আমি বলছি মাখন যেমন রৌদ্রে দিলে গলে যায় সেইরকমভাবে এক দিনের রৌদ্রেই আমাদের প্রভুরাও গলে একেবারে ধুলোর সঙ্গে মিশে যাবেন। আজ বাংলার সাড়ে চার কোটী কৃষক প্রজা বোলছে আমাদের খাজনা অত্যন্ত বেশী, খাজনার ভার আমরা আর বহন কোরতে পারি না। কিন্তু মুষ্টিমেয় কয়েকজন লোক বোলছেন যে খাজনা বেশী নয় বরং আরো বাড়ান উচিৎ। আমাদের তথাকথিত বহুরূপী মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলীর মধ্যে আমাদের প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহোদয় যখন প্রজা-নেতা-রূপে গত নির্ব্বাচন চালিয়েছিলেন যখন তিনি প্রজাদের খাজনা কমিয়ে দিবেন এইটাই প্রধান ইস্যু কোরেছিলেন এবং সেইজন্যই প্রজাদের নেতা হোয়ে নির্ব্বাচিত হোতে পেরেছিলেন। কিন্তু যখন তিনি তাঁর সাঙ্গোপাঙ্গো নিয়ে মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী গঠন কোরলেন তখনই আমরা সেই কাজের ঘোর প্রতিবাদ কোরেছিলাম, কারণ তখন আমরা বুঝতে পেরেছিলাম যে তিনি কৃষক প্রজাদের নিকট যে ওয়াদা দিয়েছেন সেটা তিনি কিছুতেই রক্ষা কোরতে পারবেন না। আমাদের বিরুদ্ধদলের চাপে পড়ে যে সামান্য একটুকু আধটুকু কাজ কোরেছেন

সেটা যথেষ্ট হোয়েছে বোলে আমি মোটেই স্বীকার করি না। মন্ত্রীরা একটা কথা বলেন যে "আমরা নজর সেলামী তুলে দিয়েছি" কিন্তু আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চাই, যে আইনের দ্বারা নজর উঠে গেল, সুদ ক্ষতিপূরণ কমল, তদ্বারা প্রজার খাজনা অন্ততঃ টাকায় চারি আনার পয়সা কমান উচিৎ ছিল না? তাহা করা হয় নাই কেন? কারণ খাজনা কমালে স্বয়ং স্যার বিজয় ও তাঁর সহকর্ম্মী অন্যান্য জমিদার মন্ত্রী, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ইংরেজ মেম্বার এবং কোয়ালিশনের জমিদার, তালুকদার মেম্বরদের আঁতে ঘা পড়ে বলেই প্রজার খাজনা কমানোর ব্যবস্থা করা হয় নাই একথা সত্য নয় কি? নজর উঠে গেল বটে কিন্তু সই নজর সেলামী তুলে দেওয়ার জন্য বোধ হয় জমিদারেরা নিজেরাই উপকৃত হোয়েছেন। কারণ বেশী খাবার আশায় পূর্ব্বেকার প্রচলিত কাঠা, বিঘা বা কানি প্রতি নজর আদায়ের ব্যবস্থা বাতিল করিয়া আইনের বলে মূল্যের শতকরা ২০৲ টাকা নজর আদায় করিবার ব্যবস্থা করিয়াও সুখ পাইলেন না, যেহেতু শরিকি মহালগুলির সমস্ত শরিক একত্রে না গেলে নজরের টাকা উঠাইতে পারেন নাই, ফলে অনেক টাকা বাজেয়াপ্ত হইয়া গভর্ণমেণ্টের তহবিলে চলে যাচ্ছিল সুধু তাই নয় বহু নজরের টাকা বেনামিতে কালেক্টরী হতে চুরি হতে ছিল, দৃষ্টান্তস্থলে আমি ময়মনসিংহ ট্রেজারীর কথা বলছি। সেখানে বেনামিতে নজরের বহু টাকা চুরি হয়েছে এবং তা নিয়া বর্ত্তমানে গুরুতর মামলার সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। তবে জমিদারদের দুঃখ হতে পারে যে তাঁরা বেশী খেতে গিয়ে কমটুকুও হারালেন। একটা প্রবাদ আছে যে, বেশী খাবার চাইলে কমটুকুও পায় না। সেই কারণেই আমি বলছি যে আজকে কোয়ালিশন দল গর্ব্ব কোরছেন যে তাঁরা নজর সেলামী তুলে দিয়েছেন, কিন্তু তাও যদি হয় তবে এর দ্বারা শতকরা মাত্র পাঁচ জন লোকের উপকার হয়েছে। কারণ যারা জমি ক্রয় কোরছে শুধু তারাই উপকৃত হোচ্ছে, কিন্তু যারা বিক্রয় কোরছে তারা মূল্য কিছু বেশী পেলেও জমি তাদের হাতে থাকছে না। সভাপতি সাহেব, ১৯৩৭ সাল থেকে খাজনা কমাবার দাবী আমরা গভর্ণমেণ্টকে জানিয়ে আসছি এবং পাটের সর্ব্বনিম্ন দর বেঁধে দেবার জন্য দাবী কোরেছিলাম, তখন তাঁরা কিছু কোরলেন না। প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহোদয় জনসাধারণকে ডাল ভাতের আশা দিয়েছিলেন কিন্তু আমরা যখন দেশবাসীর পক্ষথেকে প্রধান মন্ত্রীকে জিজ্ঞাসা কোরলাম হুজুর, দেশের গরীবদের ডাল ভাতের কি ব্যবস্থা কোরলেন, তখন তিনি উত্তর দিলেন আমি বাবুর্চি নই যে তোমাদিগকে ডালভাত দিব এখন তিনি ইস্‌লামের জিগীর ধরেছেন। তারপর যখন ইস্‌লামের কথা তাঁকে জিজ্ঞাসা করা হবে তখন তিনি কি উত্তর দিবেন জানিনা। মন্ত্রীমণ্ডল গঠন করার পর দেশের জনসাধারণ যখন মাননীয় হক সাহেবের নিকট তাদের ন্যায্য দাবি পেশ করল, সেই সময় আস্তে ধীরে সব কিছু করবেন বলে আশা দিলেন। তখন দেশের লোকেরা মনে কোরল এই সবে মাত্র গদিতে বোসেছেন হয়ত আস্তে আস্তে এঁরা সব কোরবেন। কিন্তু ক্রমাগত চার বৎসর চলে গেলো, এখন পঞ্চম বৎসরে পড়েছে এই বারে আয়ুও শেষ কিন্তু কাজ কিছুই হল না। যখন ফ্লাউড কমিশন বসান হোয়েছিল, তখনই আমরা এটা বুঝতে পেরেছিলাম যে এঁরা জনসাধারণকে ফাঁকী দিবার জন্যই এটা করছেন। এবং যখন তাঁরা খাজনা তদন্ত কমিটি কোরলেন, তখনও আমরা বুঝতে পারলাম যে জনসাধারণকে ফাঁকী দিবার জন্যই এই সমস্ত কোরছেন। কারণ সর্ব্বদাই দেখা

যায় যে গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট দেশবাসীর কোন ন্যায্য দাবি উপস্থিত করলে যদি অন্য কোন উপায়ে তাহা এড়াবার সুবিধা না থাকে তবে নানা কমিটি ও কমিশন বসাইয়া সেই বিষয়টাকে ধামা চাপা দেওয়া হয়। আমাদের খাজনার ব্যাপারেও তাই করার জন্য গভর্ণমেণ্ট খাজনা তদন্ত কমিটি, ফ্লাউড কমিশন ইত্যাদি বসিয়েছেন, ইহা আমরা পূর্ব্বেই বুঝেছিলাম এবং তার ঘোর প্রতিবাদও করেছিলাম। দীর্ঘ চারি বৎসর পর দেখা যায় যে সামনে আবার ইলেকশন আসছে, লোককে কিছু বলার দরকার হবে। তাই তাঁরা ফ্লাউড কমিশন বসিয়েছে, জমিদারী প্রথা তুলে দিবার জন্য এই সব বড় বড় কথা বলে ভোটারদের ফাঁকী দিয়ে আবার ভোট পাওয়ার জন্য প্রস্তুত হতেছেন। ফ্লাউড কমিশনের রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে যে, প্রজার খাজনা কমাবার পক্ষে কোন যুক্তি নাই বরং আরও বাড়াবার পক্ষে যুক্তি আছে। যে কমিশনের চেয়ারম্যান একজন ইংরেজ, মেম্বার হলেন বাংলার বড় বড় জমিদার, তালুকদার, সে কমিশনের নিকট হতে আর কি আশা করা যায়। আরও মজার কথা এই যে জমিদারী প্রথা তুলে দিতে হলে জমিদার ও তালুকদারগণকে তাঁদের আয়ের দশ গুণ থেকে পনর গুণ পর্য্যন্ত ক্ষতিপূরণ দিতে হবে। মন্ত্রী মহোদয়রা বিমাতার পুত্র দরদের ন্যায় অতিরিক্ত প্রজাদরদ দেখাবার জন্য আবার একটা খাজনা তদন্ত কমিটি বসিয়েছেন। সে কমিটির তদন্ত যে কবে শেষ হবে তাঁরাই জানেন এবং রিপোর্ট যে কিরূপ দিবেন খোদা জানেন। যদিও ফ্লাউড কমিশন জমিদারী প্রথা উঠিয়ে দেবার স্বপক্ষে বলেছেন, কিন্তু সঙ্গে সঙ্গে দশ থেকে পনেরো গুণ ক্ষতিপূরণ দিবার নির্দ্দেশ দিয়ে সব পণ্ড করে দিয়েছেন। কারণ এই টাকা দেওয়ার ক্ষমতা প্রজাদেরও নাই, বাংলা সরকারেরও নাই, কাজেই জমিদারী প্রথা থেকেই যাবে। আমি বোলতে চাই এই সমস্তই শুধু ফাঁকী। চাঁদিনা প্রজাদের অবস্থা অনুসন্ধান করবার জন্য আর একটা কমিটী বসিয়েছেন। এইসব কমিটী এবং কমিশন বসিয়ে দেশবাসী গরীব চাষী প্রজাকে বলা হোচ্ছে যে তোমাদের শুধু ডাল ভাত নয়, একেবারে পোলাও কোর্ম্মা দিবার ব্যবস্থাও কোরছি। এ সব শুধু ফাঁকীবাজী, ধাপ্পাবাজী, দাগাবাজী চলেছে। সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি আপনার যোগে কোয়ালিশনের মেম্বর বন্ধুদের একটা কথা জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চাই। তাঁরা যে বলেন আমি লোক দেখানোর জন্য এই সমস্ত কথা বোলছি। আমি জিজ্ঞাসা করি, তাঁদের দলভুক্ত ময়মনসিংহের এম, এল, এ মৌলবী আবদুল হাকিম সাহেব সাময়িকভাবে প্রজার খাজনা কমাবার দাবীতে যে বিল উত্থাপন করেছিলেন সেদিন তাঁরা কোন দিকে ভোট দিয়েছিলেন? এবং এ বিষয় নিয়া ভোট হল কেন? সর্ব্বসম্মতিক্রমে এই আইনটা পাশ হল না কেন? তাঁদের দলের ঘরোয়া বৈঠকে যারা হাকিম সাহেবেকে সমর্থন করেছিলেন এই পরিষদের ভোটের সময় তাঁরা কে কোন পক্ষে ভোট দিয়েছিলেন? বিরুদ্ধে ভোট দিয়েছিলেন কি না? অথবা পলায়ন করেছিলেন কি না? ময়মনসিংহ জেলার ফুলবাড়ীয়াতে যে সভা ডাকা হোয়েছিল—

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid Maulvi Sahib I will have no other alternative but to refuse to call you any more if you go on like this. The subject-matter of discussion to-day is only reduction of rent, but you are discussing the Ministry's history, the policy of the Coalition and every other thing except the subject of reduction of rent. I do

not think you have spoken two sentences about reduction of rent. As I have got the power not to call a speaker, if I find you again indulging in these speeches, I shall be most reluctantly compelled to invoke that power.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED : সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি খাজনা কমাবার কথাই বোলছি। সে কথা বোলতে গিয়ে যে সমস্ত কথা আসে সেই কথাগুলি বলতে পারব না কি?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order. That is my decision. If you go on like this I will not call you again.

Maulvi ABDUL WAHED : আমি খাজনা কমানোর সম্বন্ধেই বোলছি। সেদিন ফুলবাড়িয়াতে দশ হাজার লোকের পক্ষ থেকে আমি ঢাকার নবাব সাহেবের কাছে খাজনা কমাবার জন্য দাবী কোরেছিলাম এবং এই দশ হাজার লোকেই আমাকে একবাক্যে সমর্থন করে খাজনা কমাবার দাবী করেছিল। উপস্থিত দশ হাজার লোকেই আশা কোরেছিল যে নবাব সাহেব তাদের দাবী পূরণ কোরবেন। একথা নবাব সাহেব অস্বীকার কোরতে পারবেন না। যেহেতু স্থানীয় খাজনার হার কত তাহা সভায় উপস্থিত প্রজাদের জিজ্ঞাসা করে লিখে এনেছিলেন। আজকেও আমরা সেই দাবীই কোরছি। এইটা আমি আপনাদের জানাতে চাই। খাজনা কমাবার ব্যাপারে দেখা যায় চার বৎসর চোলে গেছে। এখনও কিছুই হয় নাই। মন্ত্রীরা এখন বলিবেন যে, আর সময় নাই আগামীতে সব করব। তাই সব কমিটী কমিশনের রিপোর্টগুলি নিয়ে প্রধান মন্ত্রী মহোদয় সামনের ইলেকশনে আবার বুকের কাপড় ফেলে দিয়ে, চোখের জলে বুক ভাসিয়ে ভোটারদের বলবেন এবার রিপোর্ট অনুসারে কাজ করে দিব। আর একবার আমাদের ভোট দাও। খাজনা এবার কমিয়ে দেব। জমিদারী প্রথা উঠিয়ে দেব ইত্যাদি। বর্ত্তমানে আমরা কৃষকপ্রজা দলের লোক যারা এই পরিষদে আছি, যাদের চাবুকের চোটে মন্ত্রীরা অস্থির, আগামী নির্বাচনে যাতে আমরা বা আমাদের ন্যায় প্রকৃত চাষী প্রজার প্রতিনিধি আসতে না পারে সেজন্য হিন্দু-মুসলমান বড় লোকেরা যুক্তি করে হিন্দু মহাসভা ও মুসলেম লীগের ভিতর দিয়ে গুরুতর ষড়যন্ত্রমূলক প্রচার ও চেষ্টা আরম্ভ করেছেন এবং দরিদ্র ও অশিক্ষিত হিন্দু-মুসলমান কৃষক সম্প্রদায়ের ভেতর ঝগড়ার সৃষ্টি কোরে অশান্তির আগুন জ্বেলে দেওয়া হোয়েছে। ইহা কেবল হিন্দু-মুসলমান বড় লোকদের স্বার্থরক্ষার জন্যই করা হচ্ছে। খাজনা কমাবার অজুহাতে চার বৎসর চলে গেল। এ পর্য্যন্ত কিছুই করা হল না। প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন যখন সংশোধিত হইয়া এই পরিষদে পাশ হয় তখন খাজনা কমানোর ধারাটা যদি জুড়ে দেওয়া হত তা হোলে কি সেটা পরিষদে পাশ হোত না? কিন্তু তা কোরলে রাজস্ব-সচিব মহাশয়ের নিজের আঁতে ঘা পড়ে, সঙ্গে সঙ্গে মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী এবং কোয়ালিশন মেম্বারদের আঁতে ঘা পড়ে, সেই জন্যই আমাদের দলের খাজনা কমানোর দাবীগুলি ভোটের জোরে উড়িয়ে দিয়ে আবার আজ তাঁরা লম্বা গলায় বোলছেন আমরা প্রজা দরদী, গরীবের বন্ধু। কি নির্লজ্জ। এইসব ছলচাতুরি আর চোলবে না। মাঝে মাঝে তাঁরা আমাদের প্রস্তাব সমর্থন কোরে বক্তৃতা করেন বটে। এটা তাঁরা করেন জনসাধারণকে ফাঁকী দেবার

জন্য। কিন্তু জনসাধারণ যখন জিজ্ঞাসা কোরবে যে ভোট কোন দিকে দিয়েছেন, তখন তাঁরা কি উত্তর দিবেন? এবার আর ছাড়াছাড়ি নাই। এবার আমগাছ আর গাবগাছে মিতালি কোরে ভোট নেওয়া চোলবে না। আজ বর্দ্ধমানের মহারাজকুমার খাজনা কমাবার প্রস্তাবে বিরোধিতা কোরেছেন। ভালই হয়েছে, কারণ আমাদের কৃষক প্রজাপার্টিকে কংগ্রেসের ভাড়াটিয়া, জমিদারের ভাড়াটিয়া বলা হয়, এবার কে কার ভাড়াটিয়া তা দেখা যাবে। মহারাজকুমারের সঙ্গে খাজনা কমানোর বিরুদ্ধে যারা ভোট দিবে তারাই ভাড়াটিয়া না কি খাজনা কমের পক্ষে যারা ভোট দিবে তারা ভাড়াটিয়া আজিকার ভোটের তালিকা দেখে দেশবাসী বিচার করিবে। এখনও হয়ত বলা হবে যে এটা ছাটাই প্রস্তাব কিন্তু আমি বলছি ময়মনসিংহের আবদুল হাকিম সাহেবের খাজনা কমানোর বিলের বিরুদ্ধে ভোট দেওয়া হলো কেন? সেটাত ছাটাই প্রস্তাব ছিল না বা সেই আইনটা পাশ হয়ে প্রজার খাজনা কমলেত মন্ত্রীদের মন্ত্রীগিরী চলে যেত না। বরং তাতে শতকরা ৮৫ জন মুসলমান চাষী প্রজার উপকার হত। তাই আমি অনুরোধ করি, মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী ও কোয়ালিশন মেম্বার কেহ যেন এ প্রস্তাবের বিরোধিতা না করেন, এই বলে আমি প্রস্তাব দৃঢ়তার সহিত সমর্থন করছি।

Mr. YUSUF ALI CHOWDHURY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am a zemindar and I feel that I must disclose my mind. The Permanent Settlement Regulations are responsible for the creation of the class of zemindars. But I believe that the system has outlived its period of utility. As a point of merit in favour of the system, it may be said that the higher class nobility and the respectable middle class have come into existence as a buffer between the State and the people and the classes as a whole have contributed to the social and political awakening of the country. The present day education for what it is worth is due more or less to the exertions of these classes.

If they have contributed to the good of the society, they have also served as an obstacle in the way of establishment of a close relation between the State and the people. The average man of the village hardly knows that there is a Government responsible to the people and ready to ameliorate his condition. He knows his *maliks*, be they the tenure-holders or the zemindars. He never knows the District Magistrate and Collector as his own men appointed to serve him in his weal and woe. Wherever in the world such a system existed it has given way. With the advent of Provincial Autonomy, we must have therefore the Great Chinese Wall demolished and the people must have connection with the State only, in every walk of life. The Permanent Settlement must go and the zemindari system must be abolished.

I accuse the system being an obstacle in the way of development of trade and industry in the land. A man by toiling and moiling will hoard money, but he will hoard it not to invest in any enterprise, but he will purchase a zemindari to pass the remaining days of his life in ease and comfort and have a heritable position of privilege secured for

his sons. The Court of Wards will protect the imbeciles and extravagants and no worry is there for a man who leaves a zemindari and unworthy successors. The temptation, therefore, is irresistible. Every officer worth the name saves money, every money-lender makes his piles to the same and acquires something of a zemindari. If you ask him to invest any money in industries, he will fly away and up till now Bengal has not been able to invest sufficient money for development of industries and trade and commerce. The far-reaching effect therefore of the system is pernicious. The earlier it goes the better. The Revenue Commission have made their deliberations. The report is before the Government. It must be implemented by suitable legislation at once. The Hon'ble Minister told us that he was examining the recommendations. Let me hope that the examination is by now finished and that legislation is on the anvil. We have waited long. We cannot wait any more. There are difficulties. Any revolution in society involves risks and difficulties. The first legislation will not be perfect. We shall amend any law we pass as soon as we find that it operates hard on any class of people. The zemindars will lose not in economic consideration, but in privilege and position. All are creatures of God. No single class has any right to lord over the rest of society. The Revenue Commission report makes it abundantly clear that by the elimination of the zemindari system economically the province will achieve a great march. There will be enough money for education, sanitation, public health, industries and the like. The balance of convenience for the society as a whole must weigh heavy with the Ministry and personal gain or loss should not be the points of consideration with them.

We cried hoarse and an amendment of the Bengal Tenancy Act was undertaken. The amendments became law. But what is the effect? *Tahari, mohori, sadiana, nazarana, dakhila, peada* are only some amongst other items of exactions current even to-day. These are not cognisable offences. Officers have no sympathy generally with the poor tenantry of Bengal. The magistracy as a whole belong to a class of people who are themselves the offenders in their own home. Can we expect that a rustic of the village will walk over 25 miles and reach a subdivisional town to take a chance of trial in which his witnesses are all under obligation to the landlord, and the magistracy with a mind leaning generally in favour of landlordism? Take the case of Education Cess. Is the Government prepared to investigate what is taking place in the countryside? The landlords have been given a clean slate to write on, and they write as they like and not as the law is. It is not 3½ pice in the rupee, but in many cases even 5 annas in the rupee is not the adequate figure. Who is there to see that the vagaries of the zemindars' officers do not play havoc in the countryside? When you have the law have also the machinery to enforce the principles. Do not shirk the responsibility. Land diluviated is reformed *in situ*. Most men on behalf of zemindars quickly swarm upon it. The cry of the

old tenant and his offer of payment of rent and demand of delivery of possession of the lands of his tenancy are very often all cries in the wilderness. The Magistrate is there with his favourite section 144 to direct the tenant out of the land. You expect a poor tenant to fight in the law court, but is it possible? Can you not conceive of a machinery to help in the administration of law on this score also?

The *jalkar* gives you revenue. But who are the people in the field? It is the toiling thousands of fishermen who work at the risk of their lives in the sun and rain and hailstorm on the breast of the ruffled rivers. How are they treated? Who is there not to loot them? Their catches attract people of all grades. It is not even a starving ration they get as remuneration of their work.

The is no law to protect the fishermen. Lawlessness is the law in the river. I hope the Ministry will not lose time to have legislation for protection of the fishermen as a class.

Two questions more and I have done. In *khas mahal*—How many tenancies were determined by rent auction and purchased by the Collector? Are the lands in possession of the Collector? Are they all settled—Or is it that they are *res nullias* now to the advantage of the men on the spot—one on the side of the Collector and another with a plough?

Land reform *in situ*. They are cultivated by the people for ten years, but grazing settlement brings a few coins to the coffers of the State. It is a matter for enquiry—What is taking place behind the screen? The story is the same in the Court of Wards.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, I have listened with very great interest to some of the speeches that have been delivered by the movers of these cut motions and by their supporters. Various points have been raised in the course of the discussion. There are two main cut motions, one moved by Mr. Ramizuddin Ahmed to discuss the Rent Enquiry Committee work and failure to make a general reduction in the rate of rent of the *raiyats*. The next motion was moved by my esteemed friend Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal to discuss the reduction of rent at least to the extent of enhancements that have taken place in the course of the last thirty years.

In spite of what has fallen from Maulvi Abdul Wahed, I venture to maintain that Government yield to none in their anxiety to give relief to the tenants of Bengal and this is not merely a lip sympathy. Their record of work during the last four years clearly and unequivocally shows what they have done. Here the Ministry has been criticised; the Hon'ble Chief Minister has been criticised, I should say, rather unjustly. It has been suggested that the Chief Minister gave certain pledges in his election, but he failed to carry out those pledges. Sir, I would again refer the honourable members to our

record of work. On the Bengal Tenancy Act we take our stand, and we hope to go down to posterity with the Bengal Tenancy Act in our hand. Sir, some of us have suffered personal loss, and I can assure my honourable friends by no means very small amounts, and this we have done out of deference to the wishes of my friends here and because of our anxiety to do our best to give relief to the tenantry of this province.

The first cut motion suggests that we should reduce rents at once and the mover wants to chastise Government for their failure to take steps in that direction. The Rent Enquiry Committee was appointed by this House. The committee consists of members from all sides of the House. Sir, the responsibility lies entirely with the committee. I do not think that the House will appreciate any interference by the Revenue Department or by Government for the matter of that in the work of that committee. The committee had been going into details; the committee undertook several tours in different districts to understand the situation and to study the problem at first hand; and I hope the committee will soon come to a decision. Therefore, I maintain that there has been no failure on the part of the Government to attach sufficient importance to this question of rent reduction. In fact, Government stand committed to the principle of moderate rent for the tenantry of Bengal. Where the rent is high, we are prepared to bring it down, but *ad hoc* reduction of rent is neither possible nor desirable. Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal has suggested a reduction at least to the extent of the increase in rent that has taken place in the course of the last thirty years. What does it mean? It means merely *ad hoc* reduction of rent——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: No, no.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I shall just prove it. There are holdings the rate of rent of which does not exceed probably two annas per *bigha*. And there may be holdings the rate of rent of which is Rs. 5 per *bigha*. Now there may have been enhancements of rent in both the cases. Suppose in the case of the higher rent there has been an increase of two annas in the rupee, that is, ten annas in all, and this is the amount by which it proposed to reduce the rent. Suppose, in the other case there has been an increase of two annas, and according to Mr. Sanyal's suggestion the present rent of four annas will have to be reduced by two annas. Sir, the rate of rent after all is a share of the produce. That fact should always be borne in mind, because it is only a share of the produce to which the proprietor of the soil is entitled. But I do not propose to go into these details. I would just place before the House the difficulty, the undesirability and inequity of *ad hoc* reduction of rent. It entails detailed examination, detailed survey and the whole question has to be

thoroughly examined before Government can agree to a reduction of rent. But if rent is high in a particular area, we have got sufficient powers vested in us under section 112 and we can always bring it down. Only the other day, in the excluded areas of Mymensingh we found the rate of rent to be extremely high, and we brought it down. And I can tell you that where it will appear to be high, we propose to apply this power. If my honourable friends will supply us with cases where the rate of rent is exorbitant, unjust and unfair, we shall not hesitate to apply the powers with which we are vested. But my friends must realise that *ad hoc* reduction of rent is not possible. I know that there are some strong feelings in this House and outside about reduction of rent, but it is difficult to give effect to the proposal without being unfair, unjust or iniquitous to those who will be affected by such proposals. It is futile to say that all landlords are rich or rolling in wealth and that therefore their rent-roll must be brought down. But there are tenants who are practically landlords; even there are tillers of the soil who are landlords. So when you are going to reduce the rent, you have to bear in mind whom you are going to hit. Probably the persons whose interests are uppermost in your mind will be hard hit and crushed out of existence if your proposals are accepted and given effect to. Government holding a position of responsibility cannot talk like you and cannot take action in a light-hearted manner. They must proceed cautiously and think seriously before taking action in a matter like this. I find the Leader of the Krishak Proja Party is smiling, but I wish he had continued in the Ministry, for then he would have been faced with the realities of the situation——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: He left it because he found it to be a hopeless job.

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Had he been in the Cabinet, he also would have given the same reply——

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: I find the Parliamentary Under Secretary on your right is prompting you, Sir Bijoy!

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Then, Sir, several observations have been made with regard to the report of the Floud Commission. Somebody has suggested that this is a document which was created just for stopping the tenants from putting forward their complaints with regard to reduction of rent. I join issue with the gentleman who has made that suggestion, because the Land Revenue Commission consisted not merely of representatives of landlords but the majority were the representatives of the tenants, who, I maintain, are no less interested in the welfare of the tenantry than the gentleman who had the audacity to make that uncharitable remark——

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: চার বছর কথা কয়েই কাটিয়ে দিলে ; কোন কাজই করলে না ।

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: Sir, I shall not take more time of the House but shall conclude presently with one or two remarks. As regards the question of fisheries raised by Mr. Madhusudan Sarkar and Mr. Yusuf Ali Choudhury, I have made it quite clear in my opening speech that we have just received the report of the Special Officer appointed to enquire into this question. He has made various recommendations which have been examined by the Board of Revenue——

Mr. SHAHEDALI: On a point of information, Sir. The Hon'ble Mr. Tamizuddin Khan stated in reply to a question to-day that the report was submitted in 1939, but the Hon'ble Minister in charge of the Revenue Department now says that it has just been received. May I know which is the correct information?

The Hon'ble Sir BIJOY PRASAD SINGH ROY: I am sorry to find that my friend is labouring under a misapprehension. There are two reports: one dealing with the industrial side of the question and the other with the revenue side on which a cut motion has been tabled. It has been proposed that fishermen should be given rights on the analogy of the rights enjoyed by the occupancy raiyats. I therefore think it is the revenue side of the question that you are talking about. The report dealing with the revenue side of the question was received only the other day, and it has been thoroughly examined by the Board of Revenue, and I propose to take up the matter immediately.

With these words, Sir, I oppose the cut motions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Mr. Sanyal, have you any objection if Mr. Ramizuddin's motion and your motion are put together for division because they are almost of identical nature?

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: We have no objection, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I put both the motions together for division. The office will only see that the division lists are shown separately.

Mr. SYED HASAN ALI CHOWDHURY: Sir, the motions relate to different issues and they should be put separately.

Mr. SPEAKER: In future let the Opposition have one attitude. I am asked to do one thing by one section and to do another thing by the other section.

Mr. M. SHAMSUDDIN AHMED: Let the motions be put separately.

Mr. SPEAKER: Then I ought to have been told before. I find that the Whips of the two parties are sometimes working together and sometimes are not working together.

Mr. NIHARENDU DUTTA MAZUMDAR: May I submit, Sir, that two different issues are involved?

Mr. SPEAKER: The matter does not concern you. I was told at the very begining that there would be no objection if the two motions were put together; otherwise the debate on the two motions would not have been tagged together. It is no use driving the members to the division lobby one after another.

The motion of Mr. Ramizuddin Ahmed that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—36.

Abdul Waheed, Maulvi.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Asimuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya.
Barma, Babu Premhari.
Barma, Mr. Puspajit.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Barman, Babu Upendra Nath.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Biswas, Babu Lakshmi Narayan.
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra.
Chakrabarty, Mr. Jatindra Nath.
Das, Mr. Monmohan.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Maniruzzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Nasker, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr. M.
Singha, Babu Kshetra Nath.
Waliur Rahman, Maulvi.

NOES—30.

Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Raschid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rasheed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi S.
Abdul Motaleb Malik, Dr.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abdus Shaheed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Hossain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Amir Ali Mia, Maulvi Md.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Ashrafali, Mr. M.
Asiad Hossain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Das, Rai Sahib Kirit Bhusan.
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Gladding, Mr. D.
Golam Sarwar Hossini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Griffiths, Mr. G.

Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmad, Khan Sahib.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hosina Murshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Hawkings, Mr. R. J.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Heywood, Mr. Rogers.
Idris Ahmed Mia, Maulvi.
Jalaluddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Jasimuddin Ahmed, Khan Saheb Maulvi.
Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawan Jah Syed.
Kennedy, Mr. I. G.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Maulvi.
Mafizuddin Choudhury, Maulvi.
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mahtab, Maharajkumar Uday Chand.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Mukerjea, Mr. Tarakanath, M.B.E.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mustaqawal Haque, Mr. Syed.
Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. M. L.
Raikut, the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Sarker, Mr. Nalini Ranjan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Shamsul Huda, Maulana.
Sinclair, Mr. J. F.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Spelier, Mr. J. H.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Walker, Mr. W. A. M.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

The Ayes being 36 and the Noes 80, the motion was lost.

The motion of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 for expenditure under the head "7—Land Revenue" was then put and a division was called by Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope, Mr. Sanyal, in future you will not ask me to do anything unless there is clear agreement between the two sections.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is true at the outset I gave you to understand that I have no objection to the two motions being put together——

Mr. SPEAKER: You told me you would have no objection.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: I did, Sir, and I take the full responsibility. But at the same time you will appreciate that sometimes it is not possible to agree to certain matters, and you will please also appreciate that the issues are different.

Mr. SPEAKER: If I had known it before, I would have ruled the first motion out of order because it raises two distinct issues. It was simply as a matter of grace and on the understanding that there was to be one discussion and there would be one voting that I allowed it.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: It is no trouble for members to go to the division lobby. We also wanted to curtail the devision in our own interest, so that we might have more speakers on our side to speak.

Mr. SPEAKER: The first motion is out of order as it raises two distinct issues.

Mr. SASANKA SEKHAR SANYAL: That is a different matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: But I allowed it because I thought there would not be a separate voting.

The motion of Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100 was then put and a division taken with the following result:—

AYES—32.

Abdul Wahed, Maulvi.
Ahmed Khan, Mr. Syed.
Aslmuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Banerji, Mr. Satya Priya.
Barma, Babu Premhari.
Barman, Babu Shyama Prosad.
Barman, Babu Upendra Nath.
Basu, Mr. Santosh Kumar.
Bose, Mr. Sarat Chandra.
Das, Mr. Monmohan.
Dutta Gupta, Miss Mira.
Dutta Mazumdar, Mr. Niharendu.
Ghose, Mr. Atul Krishna.
Giasuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Gupta, Mr. J. N.
Hasan Ali Chowdhury, Mr. Syed.
Kumar, Mr. Atul Chandra.
Kundu, Mr. Nishitha Nath.
Maji, Mr. Adwaita Kumar.
Majumdar, Mrs. Hemaprova.
Mandal, Mr. Amrita Lal.
Mandal, Mr. Krishna Prasad.
Manirazzaman Islamabadi, Maulana Md.
Maqbul Hosain, Mr.
Naskar, Mr. Hem Chandra.
Ramizuddin Ahmed, Mr.
Roy, Mr. Charu Chandra.
Roy, Mr. Manmatha Nath.
Sanyal, Mr. Sasanka Sekhar.
Shahedali, Mr.
Shamsuddin Ahmed, Mr. M.
Wallur Rahman, Maulvi.

NOES—74.

Abdul Hakim Vikrampuri, Maulvi Md.
Abdul Wahab Khan, Mr.
Abdulla-Al Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rahman, Khan Bahadur A. F. M.
Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, Mr.
Abdur Rashid Mahmood, Mr.
Abdur Rashed, Maulvi Md.
Abdur Rauf, Khan Bahadur Maulvi. S.
Abdul Metalib Malik, Dr.
Abdur Razzak, Maulvi.
Abdus Shahed, Maulvi Md.
Abul Hashim, Maulvi.
Aftab Ali, Mr.
Ahmed Hosain, Mr.
Alfazuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Anwarul Azim, Khan Bahadur Md.
Ashrafuddin, Mr. M.
Asiad Hosain Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Azhar Ali, Maulvi.
Biswas, Mr. Rasik Lal.
Chippendale, Mr. J. W.
Clark, Mr. I. A.
Farhat Bano Khanam, Begum.
Fazlul Quadir, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Gladding, Mr. D.
Golam Sarwar Hosaini, Mr. Shah Syed.
Griffiths, Mr. C.
Gyasuddin Ahmed Choudhury, Alhadj.
Hafizuddin Choudhuri, Maulvi.
Hamiduddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib.
Hasanuzzaman, Maulvi Md.
Hashem Ali Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Hasina Morshed, Mrs., M.B.E.
Hatemally Jamadar, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Hawkings, Mr. R. J.
Hendry, Mr. David.
Heywood, Mr. Rogers.
Jaslmuddin Ahmed, Khan Sahib Maulvi.

Kabiruddin Khan, Khan Bahadur Maulvi.
Kazem Ali Mirza, Sahibzada Kawas Jah Syed.
Mafizuddin Ahmed, Maulvi.
Mafizuddin Choudhury, Maulvi.
Maguire, Mr. L. T.
Mahtab, Maharajkumar Uday Chand.
Mandal, Mr. Birat Chandra.
Mandal, Mr. Jagat Chandra.
Maniruddin Akhand, Maulvi.
Miles, Mr. C. W.
Morgan, Mr. G., C.I.E.
Mozammel Huq, Maulvi Md.
Muhammad Israil, Maulvi.
Muhammad Siddique, Khan Bahadur Dr. Syed.
Muhammad Solaiman, Khan Sahib Maulvi.
Mukerjea, Mr. Taraknath, M.B.E.
Mullick, the Hon'ble Mr. Mukunda Behary.
Mustagawsai Haque, Mr. Syed.
Raikut, the Hon'ble Mr. Prasanna Deb.
Razaur Rahman Khan, Mr.
Sadaruddin Ahmed, Mr.
Sanaullah, Dr.
Sarkar, Babu Madhusudan.
Sarker, Mr. Nalini Ranjan.
Serajul Islam, Mr.
Shahabuddin, Mr. Khwaja, C.B.E.
Shamsuddin Ahmed Khondkar, Mr.
Spoller, Mr. J. H.
Sinclair, Mr. J. F.
Sirdar, Babu Litta Munda.
Suhrawardy, the Hon'ble Mr. H. S.
Stark, Mr. A. F.
Tamizuddin Khan, the Hon'ble Mr.
Tofel Ahmed Choudhury, Maulvi Haji.
Walker, W. A. M.
Yusuf Ali Choudhury, Mr.

The Ayes being 32 and the Noes 74, the motion was lost.

Mr. ASIMUDDIN AHMED: Sir, I beg to move that the demand of Rs. 31,58,000 under the head "7—Land Revenue" be reduced by Rs. 100.

মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি বাংলার চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের দখলীস্বত্ব বিশিষ্ট রায়তী স্বত্বের অধিকার দিবার জন্য এই প্রস্তাব উপস্থিত করিতেছি। বাংলার চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের দুঃখ দৈন্য প্রতিকারের জন্য এই Assemblyতে এবং বাহিরে বহুকাল যাবৎ আন্দোলন চলিয়া আসিতেছে। চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের দুঃখের কাহিনী বহু খবরের কাগজে ও সভা-সমিতিতে ও পুস্তকাকারে প্রকাশ করা হইয়াছে এবং বর্ত্তমানে কুমিল্লা, ২৪-পরগণা, বর্দ্ধমান এবং অন্যান্য জেলার বহু প্রজা এই Houseএর মেম্বারদের সঙ্গে লইয়া মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়ের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করিয়া তাহাদের দুর্গতি ও অভাব অভিযোগের বিষয় জ্ঞাপন করিয়াছে। কোন প্রতিকার না পাইয়া আমি cut motionএর প্রস্তাব দ্বারা Governmentএর দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করিতেছি। বর্ত্তমান গভর্ণমেণ্ট ১৯৩৮ সালে এ সম্বন্ধে একটী তদন্ত কমিটী গঠন করিয়াছেন কিন্তু এই চার বৎসরের মধ্যেও কমিটী তাহার report দাখিল করিতে সক্ষম হ'ন নাই। ১৯৩৯ সালে গভর্ণমেণ্ট একটী Communique issue করিয়াছিলেন যেন চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের উচ্ছেদ উৎপীড়ন না করা হয়। কিন্তু ইহাতে কিছু কাজ না হওয়ায় গত বৎসর March মাসে গভর্ণমেণ্ট Non-Agricultural Tenancy Temporary Bill আনয়ন করেন। তাহার দ্বারা দু-বৎসরের জন্য চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের উচ্ছেদ স্থগিত করিবার ব্যবস্থা হইল। তাহার ফল হইল কতকগুলি মামলা মোকদ্দমা উঠিয়াছিল সেগুলি ছাড়িয়া দিতে হইল। কিন্তু দু-বৎসরের মধ্যে এক বৎসর অতীত হইতে চলিয়াছে। এই বৎসরের পর যদি আর এক বৎসর মাত্র এই আইন বলবৎ থাকে তাহা হইলে Government কি করিয়া চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের অভাব অভিযোগের প্রতিকার করিবেন এবং তাহাদিগকে কি প্রকারে উচ্ছেদ হইতে রক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করিবেন তাহা আমি বুঝি না। চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজারা সাধারণতঃ (landless) ভূমিহীন লোক। তাহারা নিরুপায় হইয়া অনেকের বাজারে বন্দরে ও সহরে নিজেরা দোকান বা বাড়ী করিয়া বা কোন রকম চাকরী করিয়া বা মজুরী করিয়া

বাস করে এবং কোন প্রকারে জীবিকা নির্ব্বাহ করে। জমিদারদের বহু টাকা নজর দিয়া এবং দুই, তিন, চার খানা ঘর করিয়া ১০।১৫।২০ টাকা খাজনা দিয়া বসবাস বা কাজ কারবার করে। এইভাবে বিশ, পঁচিশ কি ৫০ বৎসর বাস করিবার পরও মাত্র ১৫ দিনের noticeএ তাহাদিগকে তাড়াইয়া দিবার ব্যবস্থা আছে। তাহাদের কোন স্বত্ব জন্মায় না। স্থায়ীভাবে সেখানে তাহারা বসবাস করিবার অধিকার পায় না। তাহাদের জীবন, ধন, প্রাণ একেবারে বিপন্ন। তাহাদের চেয়ে নিরুপায়, বিপন্ন ব্যক্তি কেহ আছে বলিয়া আমি মনে করি না। তাহাদের শেষকালে পাহাড়ে জঙ্গলে গিয়ে শেয়াল কুকুরের মত বাস না করে উপায় নেই। তাহারা সহরে, বাজারে, Municipalityতে যে সমস্ত যায়গায় বাস করে সেই যায়গা মানুষের বাস করিবার উপযোগী নহে। তাহারা জঙ্গল কাটিয়া, খাল ভরাট করিয়া সেখানে বাস করে। সেখানে কিছুদিন বাস করার পর সেই জমিগুলি যখন মূল্যবান হয় তখন তাহাদের সেখান হইতে তাড়াইবার ব্যবস্থা করা হয়। জমিদারের কর্ম্মচারীদের সঙ্গে মনোমালিন্যের ফলে তাহাদের কথা মত ভোট না দেওয়ার দরুণ, দোকানদারগণ বাকি জিনিষ বিক্রী না করার দরুণ, অথবা মিথ্যা সাক্ষী না দেওয়ার দরুণ তাহাদের বিরুদ্ধে notice জারী করা হয় এবং তখন তাহাদের বাধ্য হইয়া সেখান হইতে চলিয়া যাইতে হয়। কোর্ফা প্রজাদের এবং বর্গাদারদের যাহারা বার বৎসর কোন জমি চাষ করে তাহাদের ও স্বত্ব আছে এবং তাহাদের উচ্ছেদ করা যাইতে পারে না। কিন্তু চাঁন্দিনা প্রজারা বংশানুক্রমে গৃহ নির্ম্মাণ করিয়া বসবাস করিলেও স্থায়ীভাবে বসবাস করিবার অধিকার পাইবে না এবং তাহাদের স্বত্ব হইবে না। তাহারা কোন রকম স্থায়ীভাবে বাগান বাড়ী বা পুষ্করিণী খনন করিতে পারিবে না—ইহার চেয়ে জুলুম কি হইতে পারে তাহা আমি জানি না। বড় লোকেরা সহরে বাস করেন, তাহাদের চক্ষের সামনে এই সমস্ত গরীব লোকেরা কত অভাব নির্য্যাতন ভোগ করে, তাহা জানিয়া শুনিয়াও কোন রকম প্রতিকারের চেষ্টা করেন না।

চাঁন্দিনা ভূমি ৫।৭ কি ১০ বৎসরের বেশী কেউ রাখতে পারে না, এরা ১ কড়া, ২ কড়ার চেয়েও কম জমি ভোগ কোরে এবং ৫।৭ কাণী পরিমাণ জমির খাজানা দিয়া কোন মতে স্ত্রীপুত্র নিয়ে বসবাস করে। অথবা ব্যবসা বাণিজ্য করিয়া তাদের জীবিকা নির্ব্বাহ করে। সেই অবস্থা হইতে যদি তাহাদের তাড়াইয়া দেওয়া হয় তাহা হইলে তাহাদের উপায় কি হইবে? এমন অবস্থায় গভর্ণমেণ্টের বাস্তবিকই এ সম্বন্ধে বিশেষ বিবেচনা করা দরকার। গভর্ণমেণ্টের যদি বাস্তবিকই প্রজাদের উপকার এবং মঙ্গল করিবার সদ্‌ইচ্ছা থাকৃত তাহা হইলে কখনই এই তদন্ত কমিটি চার বৎসরকাল ধরিয়া তাহাদের report ঝুলাইয়া রাখিতে পারিত না। তাঁহারা public money এইভাবে অপব্যয় করিয়া Committee বসাইয়া বসাইয়া সময় নষ্ট করেন। আমার মনে হয় report না দেওয়ার পিছনে গভর্ণমেণ্টের ইঙ্গিত রহিয়াছে। এবং আমরা যাহাতে তদন্ত কমিটির report না পাওয়ার জন্য কিছু না করিতে পারি, এবং আমাদের কাছ থেকে মুক্তি পাইতে পারেন সে জন্য report লওয়া হইতেছে না এবং reportএর সুপারিশগুলি কার্য্যে পরিণত করার চেষ্টা হইতেছে না। গভর্ণমেণ্ট আর কতকাল কমিটি, Commission এর তামাসা দেখাইয়া লোকদের ভুলাইয়া রাখিবেন। দেখিতে দেখিতে চারি বৎসর

চলিয়া গিয়াছে। কাজেই বলিতে চাই বাস্তবিক যদি গভর্ণমেণ্ট দেশবাসী প্রজাদের উপকার করিতে চান, গভর্ণমেণ্টের যদি সদ্‌ইচ্ছা থাকত তাহা হইলে অবিলম্বে এই সমস্ত কার্য্য শেষ করিয়া দেওয়া প্রয়োজন মনে করিতেন। মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয় বলিয়াছেন খাজনা কমাইবার সম্ভাবনা নাই। এই কথা আরও বলা হয় যে চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের সুবিধা দিবার কোন উপায় নাই। তাহা বলিলে চলিবে না। গভর্ণমেণ্ট এবং জমিদারকে বাধ্য করিতে হইবে তাহাদের দাবী পূরণ করিবার জন্য। যেমনভাবে দেশে প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন স্থাপিত হইয়াছে, যেমনভাবে নজরনা উঠিয়া গিয়াছে, যেমনভাবে মহাজনী আইন প্রণয়ন, যেমনে সালিসী বোর্ড স্থাপিত হইয়াছে তেমনিভাবে এই গভর্ণমেণ্টের নিকট হইতে চাঁদ্দিনা প্রজাদের জন্য সুবিধা আদায় করা হইবে। জাতির দুঃখ, কষ্ট, দুর্দ্দশা এবং কলঙ্ক দূর করিবার জন্য লক্ষ লক্ষ লোক মরিতে রাজী আছে। এই সকল ফাঁকী, ধাপ্পাবাজী এবং জুয়াচুরী দ্বারা দেশকে গভর্ণমেণ্ট আর বেশী দিন ভুলাইয়া রাখিতে পারিবে না। মাননীয় মন্ত্রী সাহেব বলিয়াছেন খাজনা কমাইবার সম্ভাবনা নাই তাহা হইলে মানুষের মনে মিথ্যা আশা দিয়া তদন্ত কমিটি গঠন করিয়া, Enquiry Committee বসাইয়া দেশকে সর্ব্বনাশের পথে অগ্রসর করিবার কি প্রয়োজন আছে? এই টাকাগুলি যদি দেশের গরীব জনসাধারণের উপকারের জন্য খরচ করা হইত তাহা হইলে খুব ভাল হইত—এই কথা বলিয়া আমি আমার motion সমর্থনের জন্য উপস্থিত করিতেছি।

Mr. SHAH SYED GOLAM SARWAR HOSAINI : মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, বহু দিন পরে আমাকে বলিবার অধিকার দেওয়া হোয়েছে। তজ্জন্য আপনাকে অভিনন্দিত করিতেছি। Governmentএর land revenue policy সম্বন্ধে আমাদের বিরুদ্ধ দলের পক্ষ থেকে এখানে যে সব বক্তৃতা করা হোয়েছে তাথেকে মনে হোতে পারে যে মন্ত্রীরা দেশের জনসাধারণের মঙ্গলের জন্য কিছুই করেন নাই। কিন্তু আমি আমার বিরুদ্ধ দলের বন্ধুদের জিজ্ঞাসা করি তাঁরা পরিষদ গৃহের ভিতরে যে ধরণের বক্তৃতা করেন পরিষদের বাহিরে তাঁরা ঐ ধরণের বক্তৃতা কোরলে তাঁদের বক্তৃতা শুনবার জন্য দু'চারজন লোক পাওয়া যাবে কিনা সন্দেহ। তা থেকে বোঝা যায় মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী দেশের জন্য কি কোরেছেন ও জনসাধারণের কত প্রিয়। মন্ত্রী সভা গঠিত হওয়ার পর বাংলার জনসাধারণের আর্থিক অবস্থার অনেক উন্নতি হোয়েছে। তার দৃষ্টান্ত-স্বরূপ বলা যেতে পারে যে বাংলার মন্ত্রীমণ্ডলী যখন সফরে বাহির হন তখন প্রতি ষ্টেশনে হাজার হাজার লোক তাঁদের সম্বর্দ্ধনা করিয়া থাকেন। মাননীয় সভাপতি সাহেব, আমি আপনার যোগে আমার বিরুদ্ধ দলের বন্ধুদের বোলছি যে তাঁরা আমাদের লক্ষ্য কোরে এবং আমাদের প্রধান মন্ত্রী মাননীয় ফজলুল হক সাহেবকে লক্ষ্য কোরে নানা রকম মন্তব্য কোরেছেন। আমি তাঁদের অনুরোধ কোরছি তাঁরা আমাদের বিষয় চিন্তা না কোরে নিজেদের চিন্তায় মনোযোগ দিন। আমি জানি আমরা যা কোরছি দেশবাসী তা সমর্থন কোরছেন। Sir, আপনার যোগে আমি একটা কথা Governmentকে বোলতে চাই যে বাংলার প্রজাসাধারণের এবং খাসমহল প্রজাদের দুঃখ-দুর্দ্দশা দূর করবার জন্য তাঁরা এ পর্য্যন্ত যা কোরেছেন তা কি যথেষ্ট? Governmentকে দেশের

জন্য আরও অনেক কিছু কোরতে হবে। বাংলার প্রজাস্বত্ব আইন প্রভৃতি সংশোধন কোরে তাঁরা অনেক সুবিধা দিয়েছেন। বাংলার জমিদারেরা প্রজাকুলকে জোঁকের মতন শোষণ কোরেছেন। গভর্ণমেণ্ট বাংলার প্রজাদের রক্ষা কোরেছেন। এই পরিষদে জনৈক জমিদার বোলেছেন There is danger in reduction of rent. আমি বলি যে তাঁহার এই উক্তি সম্পূর্ণ ভিত্তিহীন। কিন্তু বাংলাদেশের অবস্থা যদি বিবেচনা করা যায় তাহোলে একবাক্যে সকলেই স্বীকার করবেন যে খাজনা কমাবার ব্যবস্থা কোরতেই হইবে। জমিদারের অধীনস্থ প্রজা এবং খাসমহলের অধীনস্থ প্রজাদের দুরবস্থার প্রতি লক্ষ্য কোরতেই হবে। আবার Sales Tax Bill pass হওয়ার দরুণ প্রজাকুল করভারে প্রপীড়িত হবে। তাদের রেহাই দেবার চেষ্টা আমাদিগকে কোরতেই হবে। আমার দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস আমাদের বিরুদ্ধ দলের প্রতিনিধিরা প্রজার সুখ দুঃখের কথা যতটা চিন্তা করেন আমাদের মন্ত্রীসভার সদস্যেরা ও কোয়ালিশন পার্টির সদস্যেরা তার চেয়ে কম চিন্তা করেন না। Sir Bijoy নিজ হস্তে প্রজাস্বত্ব সংশোধন আইন তৈয়ারী কোরেছেন। এই থেকে বোঝা যায় আমাদের সংস্পর্শে আসিয়া বাংলার জমিদারেরা ত্যাগের পথে চলেছেন। এক হিসাবে আমরা সকলেই একমত যে প্রজার খাজনা নিশ্চয়ই কমাতে হবে। বাংলাদেশের জমি দুর্ব্বল ও শক্তিহীন হয়ে পড়েছে। সেইজন্য প্রজাদের খাজনা দেওয়ার ইচ্ছা থাকলেও তারা অনেক সময় খাজনা দিতে পারে না। তারা মাথার ঘাম পায়ে ফেলে রোদে পুড়ে, জলে ভিজে পরিশ্রম যথেষ্টই কোরছে কিন্তু জমির উৎপাদিকা শক্তি কমে যাওয়ায় আশানুরূপ ফসল পাওয়া যাচ্ছে না। এই জন্য আজ বাংলাদেশের জমিদারি প্রথার উচ্ছেদ ও প্রজাসাধারণের খাজনা কমান বিশেষ দরকার হয়ে পড়েছে। তারপর Sir Bijoy Prasadকে অনুরোধ কোরছি Land Revenue Commissionএর রিপোর্ট Bill আকারে পরিষদে উপস্থিত করা হউক। এইরূপ Billকে অভিনন্দন করার জন্য আমরা সকলে প্রস্তুত হোয়ে আছি। খাসমহলের প্রজাদের আরও উন্নতি হওয়া উচিত এবং খাসমহলে যে সব দুর্নীতি চোলছে সেগুলি দূর হওয়া উচিত।

Sir, আর একটা বিষয় আমি আপনার যোগে গভর্ণমেণ্টের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ কোরছি। Certificate প্রথা কখনও মঙ্গলজনক প্রথা নয়। Certificate প্রথা উঠায়ে দেওয়া উচিত। এবং উঠায়ে দেওয়া হয়েছিল কিন্তু কিছুদিন হোতে দেখা যাচ্ছে জমিদারগণ আবার certificate power পাইতেছেন। নোয়াখালি জেলার অমরাবাদ. জয়নগর ও হায়দর জমিদারি কোঃ লিঃ ষ্টেট পুনরায় সার্টিফিকেট ক্ষমতা প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছে এবং certificate power দ্বারায় নির্দ্দয় ভাবে প্রজাকুল হতে খাজনা আদায় করা হইতেছে। আরও না কি কয়েকটি ষ্টেট certificate power পাওয়ার জন্য চেষ্টা করিতেছে, আমি মাননীয় মন্ত্রিমহোদয়ের দৃষ্টি এইদিকে আকর্ষণ করিতেছি অতি সত্বর বর্ণিত ষ্টেটগুলির certificate ক্ষমতা রহিত করার জন্য এবং আর কোন ষ্টেট যেন certificate ক্ষমতা না পায় তজ্জন্য মাননীয় মন্ত্রী মহোদয়কে অনুরোধ জানাইতেছি।

তারপর Sir, আমরা জমিদারি প্রথা উচ্ছেদ ও দাবী অনুরূপ খাজনা কমাবার জন্য বার বার গভর্ণমেণ্টকে অনুরোধ করিতেছি। প্রজা আজ সর্ব্বস্বান্ত হোয়ে যাচ্ছে। তারা পয়সার অভাবে দৈনন্দিন জীবিকা নির্ব্বাহ কোর্ত্তে পারে না। অনেকেই অন্নবস্ত্রের অভাবে ও রোগে ঔষধের অভাবে মারা যাচ্ছে। আজ প্রজাদের দুঃখের কথা যদি জানতে হয় তাহলে সেটা আমাদের বিরুদ্ধ দলের বন্ধুদের কাছ থেকে জানা অসম্ভব। আমরা বিশেষত: Coalition Partyর সভ্যেরা প্রজা সাধারণের মধ্যে বিচরণ করি। Coalition Partyর কোন সভ্য তাদের address কোরলে হাজার হাজার লোক তাঁর কথাগুলি বেদবাক্যের মত শুনবে। আর আমার বন্ধুদে বাংলার দেশের বুকের উপর public meeting address করবার কোন সুযোগ সুবিধা নেই। এই বিষয়ে আমার বন্ধুদের আমার চেয়ে অনেক বেশী অভিজ্ঞতা আছে। Sir, আজ আমার বিরুদ্ধ দলের বন্ধুরা যেভাবে মন্ত্রীসভাকে এবং Hon'ble Mr. Fazlul Huqকে আক্রমণ কোরেছেন এটা আমার মনে হয় Parliamentary রীতির বিরোধী। আজ সারা বাংলার যিনি Father, যাকে সারা বাংলা রক্ষক বোলে সম্মান করে, যিনি সারা বাংলার প্রধান মন্ত্রী, সেই মহাপ্রাণ পুরুষকে এরূপ হীনভাবে আক্রমণ করা আমার মতে Parliamentary রীতির ঘোর বিরোধী। Sir, আমার বন্ধুদের আচরণে আশ্চর্য্য হবার কিছুই নেই। বন্ধুদের কাছ থেকে এই প্রকারের উক্তি ছাড়া আর কি আশা করা যেতে পারে।

দেশের লোকের চোখ ফুটেছে। তারা এই সব cut motionএর অর্থ বোঝে। তারা জানে যে এই সব কুম্ভীর-ক্রন্দন বই আর কিছু নয়। আমরা দেশের হাজার হাজার লোককে যখন cut motionএর অর্থ ও উদ্দেশ্য বুঝিয়েছি তারা তখনই উত্তর দিয়েছে আমরা cut motion সমর্থন চাই না। প্রধান মন্ত্রী Fazlul Huq সাহেবকে চাই, তখন তারা উত্তর দিয়েছেন হাজার হাজার cut motion আনলেও আমরা প্রধান মন্ত্রী মৌলভী ফজলুল হক সাহেবকে support কোর্ব্ব। Sir, প্রবাদ বাক্যে বলে "যাকে দেখতে নারি তার চলন বাঁকা"। মৌলভী ফজলুল হক সাহেব যদি সারা বাংলার প্রজাদের ঋণ থেকে মুক্তি দেন এবং খাজনা কমিয়ে দিয়ে সারা বাংলাকে স্বর্গে পরিণত করেন তথাপি আমাদের বন্ধুদের মুখে কৃতজ্ঞতার বাণী ফুটবে না। কৃষক প্রজার কথাই হোচ্ছে Coalition Partyর কথা। তাদের তরফ থেকে গভর্ণমেণ্টকে পুন: অনুরোধ কোরছি তাঁরা সত্তর বাংলার প্রজাদিগকে ঋণ হইতে অধিক খাজনা হতে মুক্তি দিন, তাদের relief দিন, তাদের খাজনা কমিয়ে দিন এবং তাদের দুঃখ দৈন্যের প্রতি সহানুভূতির সঙ্গে দৃষ্টিপাত করুন এবং বাংলার জমিদারি প্রথার উচ্ছেদ করুন।

Adjournment.

It being 8-5 p.m.—

The Assembly was adjourned till 4-45 p.m. on Thursday, the 27th March, 1941, at the Assembly House, Calcutta.

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